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THE EMERGENCE OF GENTILE
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CONFERENCE:

A SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH
TO THE GROUP DYNAMICS OF THE
PARTICIPATION OF GENTILE
BELIEVERS IN THE EARLY CHURCH

by

Anne Faulkner

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ABSTRACT

This thesis looks at the Jerusalem Conference and Antioch dispute as described by Paul in *Galatians* (2.1-14) and *Acts* (15). A new approach to the topics is used, that of using models derived from socio-psychological research. The Jerusalem Conference and Antioch dispute are concerned with group interactions and dynamics; socio-psychological research studies the behaviour of individuals in social groups and so is well suited to study this aspect of early church history.

I argue that the emergence of Gentile leadership at Antioch precipitated the need for the Jerusalem Conference. Whereas ‘sympathizers’ to Judaism, lacking circumcision, were not fully integrated into Jewish communities, Gentile believers at Antioch underwent the initiation rite of baptism. Thus Gentile believers had a greater sense of belonging than did ‘sympathizers’ in Judaism. Also Gentiles entered the Antiochene church in numbers, forming a distinct subgroup within the community. These two factors provided ideal conditions for Gentile leadership to emerge. However, leadership inferred a certain status for Gentile believers. This was opposed by some Jewish believers who insisted on complete Torah observance, including circumcision, for full membership of the early church. The Jerusalem Conference met to resolve the issue.

Paul’s claim that nothing was added to his gospel implies that the Jerusalem Conference accepted Gentile membership of the church, including Gentile leadership, without circumcision. This would be unacceptable to the Law-observant Jewish believers. To avoid schism the Conference needed a compromise which appeased the Jewish believers. I suggest that the compromise was the ‘two missions’; Gentile believers were accorded the status of full membership as Gentiles, but provision was made for those Jewish believers, who experienced threats to their Jewish identity by associating with Gentile believers under these conditions, to avoid such Gentile contacts. The test of the ‘two missions’ came at Antioch. Peter, in eating with Gentiles, accepted their status as full members of the church. However, the ‘people from James’ did not accept the Gentile believers on equal terms and insisted on their right to avoid such contact with Gentiles. Peter and the other Antiochene Jews had to choose – offer hospitality to their fellow Jews and withdraw from Gentile contact or maintain table fellowship with Gentiles and isolate their fellow Jews. They opted to extend hospitality to the Jews, but this decision implied a rejection of the Gentiles’ status within the early church.

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D E C L A R A T I O N

The work in this thesis is based on research carried out whilst a graduate student in the Department Theology and Religion, the University of Durham, England. No part of this thesis has been submitted elsewhere for any other degree or qualification and it is all my own work unless referenced to the contrary in the text.

Anne Faulkner

25th January 2010

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Issues

In Chapter 2 of the *Letter to the Galatians*, Paul describes two significant events in the life of the early church – the Jerusalem Conference and the incident at Antioch. The Jerusalem Conference was an important landmark in the history of the early church for it sought to resolve the issue of the Gentile believers and, in expanding membership of the early church beyond Torah-observant Jews, it influenced markedly the future development of the church. The incident at Antioch, which Paul places subsequent to the Jerusalem Conference, has fascinated biblical scholars for centuries for it describes a conflict between the two foremost leaders of the early church, Paul and Peter, where Paul ‘confronted Peter to his face’ and accused Peter of ‘not walking in line with the truth of the gospel’ (*Gal.* 2.13).

1.1.1 Early Approaches to the Antioch Dispute

Of the two events perhaps more attention has been given to the incident at Antioch. Paul describes the dispute briefly in just four verses (*Gal.* 2.11-14), which leave much of the details unresolved. The cause of the acrimony is table fellowship (*Gal.* 2.11-12) of some sort but exactly what is open to conjecture. Early commentators seemed unable to attribute fault to the great saint, Peter. Clement of Alexandria argued that the Cephas of Galatians 2 was not the apostle Peter but was one of the seventy (*Lk.* 10.1).¹ Origen questioned the reliability of the Antioch event as related by Paul preferring to see the incident as a staged affair aimed at enabling Paul to condemn the Judaizers more effectively and this explanation was taken up by Chrysostom and Jerome.² Augustine argued for a return to a belief in the veracity of the text and used the incident to demonstrate how even holy men like Peter could sometimes be in error but that Peter demonstrated his saintly humility by accepting the rebuke.³ Luther, too, maintained the historicity of the text and defended Paul

¹ According to Eusebius, I, X11, p 99 and cited in Cummins, 2001, p 3. A similar approach has been made more recently by Ehrman, 1990.

² Cited in Luther, 1953, p 115 and Cummins, 2001, p 3.

³ Plumer, 2003, p 145.

against any charges of pride for confronting the greatest of the apostles for he did so in defence of the gospel.⁴ These few examples show how the beliefs and culture of the time can colour the interpretation given by the commentator to the incident – a tendency which continues today and is probably evident in this thesis (see final chapter).

Although so much attention has been focused on the Antioch incident, the Jerusalem Conference and Antioch dispute are not two independent incidents. It is clear from Paul's account that he is making a direct comparison between the events. In his previous historical list of events he links each subsequent occurrence with 'then' (ἐπειτα) giving the impression of a chronological history (*Gal.* 1.18, 21, 21). However, when he comes to the Jerusalem Conference and Antioch incident, Paul uses 'but when' (ὅτε δέ) to connect the two events indicating a significant, yet contrasting, connection between them. The significance of this phrase is evident from Paul's uses of ὅτε δέ at other places in Galatians. Paul uses this link when he aims at a significant contrast between two related events. Previous to *Gal.* 2.11, he used it in contrasting his earlier state as a zealous Jew with his later state after God revealed himself to him (*Gal.* 1.18). Subsequently Paul uses ὅτε δέ to contrast Peter's behaviour in first eating with Gentiles then drawing back and setting himself apart from them (*Gal.* 2.12). Later (*Gal.* 4.4) Paul uses this phrase to contrast the time before Christ when heirs were slaves under the Torah with the time after Christ when they are no longer slaves but sons (i.e. after God sends his Son to redeem those under the Law). It is clear, therefore, that Paul treats the Jerusalem Conference and the incident at Antioch as related, yet contrasting, events. At Jerusalem Paul won the day; the Jerusalem church leaders extended the hand of fellowship to him and accepted his mission to the Gentiles unconditionally (*Gal.* 2.9). In contrast, at Antioch, Peter's behaviour was hypocritical (*Gal.* 2.13) and not in accord with the gospel (*Gal.* 2.14). Thus I argue that the finding of the Jerusalem Conference is crucial to the interpretation of the Antioch dispute. Any attempt to understand the Antioch incident is dependent on a reasonable comprehension of the decision reached at Jerusalem. The Jerusalem Conference gave a theoretical solution to the issue of the Gentile believers at Antioch and this solution was tested in practice subsequently at Antioch and, in Paul's opinion, Peter and the other Jewish believers failed to put the theory into practice. It will be the strategy of this thesis to spend considerable effort in analysing the Jerusalem Conference and its findings and then to test this analysis and its conclusions against the incident at Antioch.

⁴ Luther, 1953, pp 114-116.

1.1.2 Recent Approaches to the Jerusalem Conference and Antioch Dispute

In recent times, some commentators have endeavoured to view the Antioch incident in the light of the findings of the Jerusalem Conference.⁵ Many commentators believe that the Jerusalem meeting was concerned with circumcision only and that table fellowship was not discussed or, at least, not explicitly worked out.⁶ Dunn seems typical of this stance in that he argues that the Jerusalem Conference, in principle, removed from Gentile believers the obligations of Torah observance, particularly circumcision.⁷ However, 'the issue of the food laws had not been raised explicitly and was not explicitly part of the agreement'.⁸ That table fellowship was not discussed at the Jerusalem meeting of *Gal.* 2.1-10 seems inherently unlikely. The meeting was called, not by a church of Gentiles, but by the mixed church of Antioch where Jews and Gentiles were accustomed to close association; their living in close contact was integral to the Gentile problem which precipitated the need for the Conference. Moreover, the very presence of the Gentile believer, Titus, forced the issue of Jewish/Gentile relationships on the Jerusalem 'pillars'.⁹ Titus was accepted without circumcision (*Gal.* 2.3) and it is improbable that, during the time of his visit to Jerusalem, he did not participate in commensality with Jewish believers as Dunn, himself, points out.¹⁰ By their actions, if not by their words, the 'pillars' accepted commensality with Gentiles in the person of Titus, albeit within a Jewish environment.

Esler believes that an agreement was reached at Jerusalem but that James never meant to abide by it.¹¹ Esler's argument rests on the sealing of the agreement by the offering of the right hand of fellowship but it was an oath which would be binding on an orthodox Jew. According to Esler the atmosphere of the Jerusalem Conference had been confrontational. Paul had forced the hand of the 'pillars' by introducing Titus into the deliberations which enabled Peter and James to agree verbally to the decisions without any real intention of adhering to the agreement. They had been forced into an unfavourable

⁵ What follows represents a brief overview. A more detailed analysis is given in subsequent chapters.

⁶ Conzelmann, 1987, p 119; Taylor, 1992, p 125; Dunn, 1993, p 122.

⁷ Dunn, 1993, p 105.

⁸ Dunn, 1993, p 122.

⁹ Esler, 1995, p 301.

¹⁰ Dunn, 1993, p 122. Even if he dined alone there must have been Eucharistic celebrations during this period.

¹¹ Esler, 1995, pp 308-310. Catchpole also believes that James broke the Jerusalem agreement (Catchpole 1977, p 443).

conclusion which they did not regard as binding on them. These arguments are unconvincing; they rely on a lack of integrity in Peter, if not in James, for Peter not only offered 'the right hand of fellowship' (*Gal.* 2.9) but subsequently confirmed his assent to the agreement by his action of eating with Gentile believers when he went to Antioch (*Gal.* 2.12). Holmberg describes Esler's solution as

the hypothesis of ruthless power players, out to settle scores and defend their honour by smart agreement breaking.¹²

Sim (and Watson in his first edition) surmises that Paul lost the debate on Gentile circumcision at Jerusalem but that the Antiochene church disregarded the verdict.¹³ It is unlikely that both Paul and Luke (in *Acts* 15) deliberately misrepresented the outcome of the Jerusalem meeting. As it seems probable that the agitators (*Gal.* 5.12) at Galatia would be acquainted with the verdict of the Jerusalem Conference, for Paul to be discovered a liar would have severely damaged his argument to the Galatian Gentiles; throughout this letter Paul is at pains to stress the truth of all he writes (as *Gal.* 1.20; 4.16). All these solutions, which assume some discrepancy in Paul's account of the Jerusalem Conference and the actual decisions, imply either a lack of integrity in the 'pillars' at the Jerusalem meeting or a blatant transgression of the Jerusalem agreement by Peter, Paul and/or Barnabas at Antioch, prior to the arrival of the 'people from James' (*Gal.* 2.12).

Some commentators have adopted more moderate solutions to the dichotomy of the Jerusalem Conference and subsequent Antioch dispute. In the revised edition, Watson, in his revised work, argues that the Jerusalem Conference merely confirmed 'the legitimacy of the missionary activity among the Gentiles' without addressing the issue of Gentile circumcision.¹⁴ He sees the problem which precipitated the need for the Conference as the success of the Gentile mission which caused tensions in the Antiochene church.¹⁵ For Watson the issue of circumcision only arose after the Conference with the table fellowship at Antioch which precipitated the dispute there (*Gal.* 2.11-14).¹⁶ However, it is not obvious how the increased numbers of Gentile believers at Antioch should be problematic for some Jewish believers at Antioch who

¹² Holmberg, 1998, p 410.

¹³ Watson, 1986, pp 53-56; Sim, 1998, pp 99-100.

¹⁴ Watson, 2007, pp 102 and 105.

¹⁵ Watson, 2007, p 103.

¹⁶ Watson, 2007, p 106.

were, presumably, used to having contact with Gentile sympathizers in the Jewish synagogues and used to contact with Gentiles in the wider Diaspora environment. Further, increased numbers of Gentile believers within the church does not seem to tally with the idea of the ‘freedom’ which was espied by the ‘false brothers’ (*Gal.* 2.4). In addition, Paul’s reference, in the context of the Jerusalem Conference, to the lack of compulsion from the Jerusalem church for Titus to be circumcised (*Gal.* 2.3) suggests that circumcision was on the agenda at Jerusalem.¹⁷

Holmberg argues that the Conference approved a Torah-free regime for Gentile believers but, to protect the Jewishness of the Jewish believers, it did not endorse common table fellowship. The ‘people from James’ came to Antioch and solved the problem of table fellowship by invoking the Jerusalem agreement which stipulated separate commensality for Jewish and Gentile believers (based on *Gal.* 2.7, 9).¹⁸ Holmberg envisages separate table fellowship being part of the agreement of the Jerusalem Conference but he fails to give an account of the separation other than on ethnic lines. Such an ethnic separation is unlikely to have met with Paul’s approval, given his reaction to Peter’s withdrawal from table fellowship at Antioch (*Gal.* 2.11-14) and takes no account of the obvious shared commensality at Antioch prior to the arrival of the people from James. While this solution has some advantages in that it explains the withdrawal of Peter from table fellowship, a complete partition of Jewish and Gentile believers into separate table fellowships is ultimately unsatisfactory. It still involves two Jews, Paul and Barnabas, in commensality with Gentiles as leaders of that community and also imposes on the Antiochene believers a system of separate commensality which would appear to be a retrograde step for the community. If the agreement allowed for mixed commensality for Paul and Barnabas, by virtue of their privileged position as apostles to the Gentiles, the decision of Barnabas to follow Peter in withdrawing from commensality with Gentiles becomes totally inexplicable. Also inexplicable is Peter’s initial willingness to eat with the Gentile believers. Holmberg’s solution, of a stipulation for separate commensality for Jewish and Gentile believers, has much to recommend it but a simple division based on Jewish or Gentile ancestry simply does not work.

¹⁷ Watson (2007, p 102) argues that this reference ‘does not necessarily imply that circumcision was even on the agenda’.

¹⁸ Holmberg, 1998, p 410 and also Betz, 1979, p 108.

Taylor may provide a further insight into the problem. He maintains that the decision of the Jerusalem Conference upheld the positions of both Jewish and Gentile believers.

Both churches would preach to and welcome all who would listen, but the gospel of circumcision, represented by James, Peter and John, would be obligatory only for Jews, and the gospel of uncircumcision, represented by Barnabas and Paul would apply only to Gentiles.¹⁹

At Antioch the two gospels met head on when the ‘people from James’ arrived. Prior to their arrival Peter had been content to be part of the mixed church of Antioch which followed ‘the gospel of the uncircumcised’ but the ‘people from James’ were very definitely of the ‘gospel of the circumcised’. According to Taylor, the withdrawal from commensality of Peter, Barnabas and the Antiochene Jewish believers was in deference to the visitors’ scruples and an example of Jewish hospitality,²⁰ a temporary measure designed to last for the duration of their visit only.²¹ Taylor justifies this conclusion by arguing that the Jerusalem Conference included stipulations which, whilst allowing the Antiochene church to adhere to its own understanding of the gospel, prohibited it from imposing its gospel on Jewish believers,²² and also retained the right for the Jerusalem Church to regulate the practices of the Antiochene Church should its own security and missionary success be jeopardised by the Antiochene practices.²³ Holmberg rightly complains that neither of these stipulations is supported by the text.²⁴ But, if the Jerusalem Agreement could be understood as likely to have incorporated such requirements, then Taylor’s solution, based on consideration for the scruples of the more Torah-observant believers, may be attractive.

1.1.3 The Approach of This Thesis

While most commentators fail to give a cohesive connection between the Jerusalem Conference and the Antioch dispute, the proximity and linking of the two events in

¹⁹ Taylor, 1992, p 115.

²⁰ Taylor, 1992, pp 134-135.

²¹ Taylor, 1992, p 132.

²² Taylor, 1992, p 115.

²³ Taylor, 1992, p 121.

²⁴ Holmberg, 1998, p 412.

Paul's *Letter to the Galatians* (as discussed above) strongly suggests that such a link must exist. Both Holmberg and Taylor offer options of how this may occur but neither gives a totally satisfactory account; Holmberg's separation on ethnic lines is too rigid to account for the activity at Antioch prior to the arrival of the 'people from James' and Taylor's explanation of consideration for the scruples of Jerusalem's more Torah-observant Jewish believers seems to require unjustified non-textual additions to the description of the findings of the Jerusalem Conference. Yet some division of the two groupings of the early church is indicated by Paul's own account in passages such as:

I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised (for he who worked through Peter for the mission to the circumcised worked through me also for the Gentiles) (*Gal.* 2.7-8).

We should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised (*Gal.* 2.9).

To understand how a separation of the Jewish and Gentile subgroups of the early church could be entailed by the decision of the Jerusalem Conference in such a way that it was acceptable both to the 'pillars' and to Paul, it is, perhaps, necessary to take a step back in time and look, not only at the Jerusalem Conference itself, but also at the events which precipitated the need for such a meeting.

It seems evident that the number of Gentile believers was increasing to a greater extent at Antioch than in any other section of the early church. *Acts* (11.20-21) states this and the records of Josephus, who reports that there was a relatively high population of Jews in Antioch who enjoyed special privileges and that many Antiochene Gentiles had an apparent interest in Judaism in that city, suggest that the climate and culture of the city may have been right for significant interest in this new and vibrant form of Judaism.²⁵

But the increased numbers alone are unlikely to have precipitated the need for definitive rulings regarding the Gentile believers. Diaspora Jews, particularly at Antioch, were used to having contact with Gentiles on a daily basis. Jews had the privilege of buying their own (non-Gentile) oil for the gymnasia,²⁶ indicating Jewish participation in

²⁵ *Jewish War* 7.43-45; 7.100-110.

²⁶ *Jewish Antiquities* 12.120.

the gymnasia.²⁷ They seemed to have occupied positions of wealth and high social status and *Acts* gives evidence for Jewish Christians, Manaen (*Acts* 13.1) and Barnabas (*Acts* 4.36-37), being men of wealth. Josephus, too, indicates that there were wealthy Jewish families and men of social importance in Antioch (*Jewish War* 2.469; 7.45). Gentile sympathizers were also associated with Jewish synagogues (*Jewish Antiquities*. 18.82; *Against Apion*; 2.210; 2.123; 2.282 also *Lk.* 7.5), and even visited the Temple in Jerusalem (*Jewish Antiquities* 3.318-319; 14.110). Diaspora Jews, on the whole, had accommodated themselves to contact with Gentiles in cities such as Antioch and there seems little reason why the early church, as a new branch of Judaism, could not similarly accommodate itself to mixing with Gentile believers under the same terms as Diaspora Jews mixed with Gentile sympathizers.

In this thesis I shall argue that there were significant differences between the relationship between Jewish and Gentile believers in the early church at Antioch and the relationship between Jews and Gentile sympathizers in the Jewish synagogues in Diaspora cities. Firstly, the initiation rite for Judaism was circumcision for males – Gentile sympathizers did not undergo circumcision and, therefore, remained outside full membership of the synagogue, whereas the initiation rite for entry into the early church was the less visible and painful ritual of baptism (*Acts* 2.38, 41; 8.12-16, 36-38; 9.18; 10.45; 16.15, 33; *Gal.* 3.37; *Rom.* 6.3; *1 Cor.* 1.14). Gentile believers were more likely to regard themselves as full members of the early church than were the sympathizers to Judaism. Secondly, the large number of Gentile believers attaching themselves to the Antiochene church means that the Gentile believers would form a significant subgroup of the church at Antioch, unlike the less numerous Gentile sympathizers within the synagogues. According to the insights of social psychology a significant subgroup of Gentile believers, who regarded themselves as full members of a community, would produce conditions which were ripe for the emergence of Gentile leadership of this subgroup.

In the subsequent chapters I aim to use both biblical and non-biblical sources to trace the history of the Gentile believers at Antioch. Alongside the use of these historical sources I shall employ the tools of social psychology in an attempt to understand the group dynamics of the church at Antioch composed, as it was, of different

²⁷ Barclay (1996a, pp 256-257) concludes ‘that this concession applied to those Jews who were training in the gymnasia (on the way to Antiochene citizenship)’.

subgroups of Gentile and Jewish believers. I shall first trace the origins of the Gentile subgroup of the Antiochene church from the Gentile sympathizers present in the synagogues. Then I shall argue, using social psychological analysis, that the numbers and status of these Gentile believers facilitated the emergence of power structures and leaders from this subgroup. Gentile leaders began to emerge at Antioch and, I maintain, it was this emergence of Gentile leaders which precipitated the need for the Jerusalem Conference. As soon as the prospect of Gentile leadership emerged, the status of the Gentiles within the early church became a live issue. Leaders preside over meetings of the community and formulate policies which are instrumental in fashioning the future development of the community; they exercise power over other members of the community. It is not difficult to imagine the ensuing debate over the extent of the authority of Gentile believers who were beginning to have aspirations of leadership: Should it be confined to the Gentile believers in the subgroup or extend over Jewish believers also? Should it happen at all? The emergence of non-Jewish leaders would mean that Gentile believers could no longer be regarded in the same way as the Gentile sympathizers to Judaism in the synagogues; innovative rulings were needed to accommodate the new status of the Gentiles in the Antiochene church. With this background I shall then return and attempt to understand the decisions of the Jerusalem Conference, again using the tools of social psychology (this time employing the analytical social psychological work done on inter-group relationships, group identity and group bias) to identify the possibilities available to the 'pillars' in attempting to reconcile the various Gentile and Jewish factions present at the meeting. Finally, I shall look at the Antioch dispute in the light of the findings of the Jerusalem Conference and relate this to the more recent data of the social psychology of groups in conflict and group schism.

1.2 Leadership

1.2.1 Leadership in Groups

It seems almost inevitable that, when people come together in groups, some members emerge as leaders. Leadership appears to be a fundamental feature of most social groups. These leaders may be the designated 'leader' of the group or those who occupy roles within the group (e.g. secretary, treasurer) such that these roles confer

status, influence and power on those occupying them. In the larger society, leaders may be democratically elected, be appointed by tradition such as monarchies, or impose their leadership by force as in dictatorships. In all cases, except that in which leadership is imposed by force, leaders lead with the agreement of the rest of the group; leaders lead only because followers are prepared to follow. Any study of leadership and authority must begin with Weber's classic study of legitimate authority. Weber distinguished three forms of legitimate authority: a) rational or legal authority which resides in the legitimacy of mutually accepted rules and those occupying the office which enforces them, b) traditional authority which is derived from the 'established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions' and c) charismatic authority which resides in 'devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person'.²⁸ Rational-legal authority is based on the right to power of those legally elevated to positions of power; in democracies those legally elected to power by ballot represent rational-legal authority – their policies best reflect the desires and wishes of the majority. Traditional authority rests on the belief in the sacredness of tradition and the legitimacy of those exercising power through tradition; it is exemplified by hereditary leadership such as monarchies where the hereditary heir is deemed the best person to lead but monarchs still rule by the consent of the populace for, should this opinion change, hereditary monarchs can be deposed. The great leaders who appear at certain times in history exemplify the charismatic authority and their power resides in their character and their person. The great leaders appear to combine a number of traits; they exemplify, in some way, the aspirations of the rest of their society, they have a special and distinctive personality which predisposes them to lead, and their leadership coincides with a particular situation or time in history when their particular attributes are most required. In our own times leaders such as Mandela, Churchill and Hitler spring to mind.²⁹

In smaller groupings, in which most members know each other and meet in face-to-face situations, leaders and other role-occupiers tend to emerge from within the ranks of the group. These, too, seem to correspond to Weber's rational-legal form of legitimate authority. They are the people with particular talents, abilities or capabilities which contribute to the better functioning of the group as a whole. If the group is specifically task-orientated, their skills enhance the possibility of the group completing

²⁸ Weber, 1968, pp 215-216

²⁹ Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, pp 310-313.

the task successfully either by their own specific skills which assist task completion or by their ability to facilitate other group members in this regard. In groups convened for more social purposes, leaders' abilities facilitate the smooth running of the group and contribute to the general enjoyment and satisfaction of other group members. In this way the leaders and role-occupiers are deemed to contribute more to the group than 'ordinary' members and are rewarded for their efforts by the group who confer status, authority and influence on these special members.³⁰ In addition, the group members can project leadership traits on to some members of the group because of their, the general membership's, perception of certain members as having the capacity for leadership. Thus research indicates that juries often elect as their foremen (leaders) those people who appear to occupy higher socio-economic status and are professional people, rather than those who appear less well-educated or of lower socio-economic status.³¹ In the smaller group situation, therefore, leadership is a function both of the leader of the group and of the followers.

1.2.2 Leadership in the Early Church

The early church was a new movement and such new movements have a distinctive authority based on charisma of their instigator rather than institutional authority. This is the 'Great Man' theory of sociology. Holmberg, in his book *Paul and Power* has investigated leadership in the early church communities, particularly the Pauline churches. Holmberg bases his investigation on Weber's sociological analysis of authority.³²

1.2.2.1 Charismatic Leadership

Weber's model of the charismatic leader centres on the individual although he recognizes that charismatic leaders gain their authority only so long as his charisma is recognised freely by his followers.³³ The charismatic leader considers himself, and is considered by his followers, to have a direct call from God – a call which endows him with magical

³⁰ Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, pp 309, 319-321. These aspects are covered in greater detail in Chapter 2.

³¹ Ridgeway, 2001.

³² Weber, 1968.

³³ Weber, 1968, pp 241-245.

powers and a radical mission. For Weber, only Jesus in the primitive church had this 'pure' form of charismatic leadership.³⁴

Although Weber regards Jesus as the only 'pure' charismatic leader of the primitive church, Holmberg argues that the early church continued as a charismatic movement after the death of its leader. It still retained some of the characteristics of a charismatic movement in the absence of Jesus. It retained its belief in an imminent end to this world (*1 Cor.* 7.31; *Heb.* 9.26) and continued to structure itself along the lines of a charismatic movement. The apostles (the inner group) regarded themselves as the 'staff' of Jesus, chosen by him personally, which leads to an elitist consciousness. They left their previous way of life to become followers and were supported financially by other members (the outer group) who continued in their ordinary way of life.³⁵ In addition, some 'ordinary' members exhibited charismatic behaviour such as prophecy, miracle working, healing and glossolalia (*Acts* 10.46; 19.6; *1 Cor.* 12.10 and 28-30; 14.5) which implies some sort of gift from God.³⁶ Yet this is not the 'pure' charisma of Weber, for this charisma is only acceptable to the extent that it conforms to the teachings and vision of the original charismatic leader. It does not have the freedom of the original 'pure' charisma. So Paul threatens the Galatians

But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed. (*Gal.* 1.8)

Holmberg observes that "charismatically" endowed leaders within the church ... have no original message or mission of their own'.³⁷ Thus, the change from 'pure' charismatic authority to traditional/legal authority has begun.

1.2.2.2 Institutionalization of Charismatic Leadership

Weber claims that charismatic authority is basically unstable and that institutionalization/routinization develops rapidly within new movements.³⁸ The impetus

³⁴ Weber, 1968, p 1123 also Holmberg, 1978, pp 150-151.

³⁵ Holmberg, 1978, pp 151-152.

³⁶ Holmberg, 1978, p 159.

³⁷ For example Paul attempts to reduce the importance of glossolalia at Corinth because it does not edify (*1 Cor.* 14.23-26 and 39-40). Holmberg (1978, p 159) observes that Paul sets limits to the exercise of prophecy and places it under his authority (*1 Cor.* 14.29-32 and 37-40).

³⁸ Weber, 1968, pp 246-254.

for change normally is the death of the charismatic leader. Following this death the ability to change is diminished and the group becomes a movement which passes on the sayings, way of life and vision of its leader; in other words it develops a tradition which is to be passed on to succeeding generations (e.g. *Gal.* 1.8; *1 Cor.* 14.37-38).³⁹ This is the beginning of institutionalization and of the transfer from charismatic to rational/legal and traditional authority.⁴⁰ Holmberg redefines 'routinization' to include several stages of 'institutionalisation'.⁴¹ For Holmberg 'institutionalisation' is inevitable and begins as soon as 'human interaction begins'⁴² for, with human interactions, come 'habitualized actions', assignment of roles and 'generalized consensus'.⁴³ In this way the authority becomes 'institutionalised'.⁴⁴ This early 'primary institutionalization' can start even during the lifetime of the original charismatic leader.⁴⁵ However, once the charismatic leader dies then 'secondary institutionalization' takes place.⁴⁶ Those who knew and were chosen by the charismatic leader before his death have a privileged position. They become the leaders of the movement and the custodians of the tradition. They safeguard the words, messages, rituals and institutions which he created. During this 'secondary institutionalization' a process occurs which

transforms unconsolidated verbal tradition into a body of normative texts, ways of living and a typical ethical "atmosphere" into a formulated code of behaviour and a paraenetical teaching tradition, community rites into organized forms of worship.⁴⁷

In the early church those apostles who knew Jesus and were chosen by him (his 'staff') seemed to occupy this privileged position. They were the 'entrepreneurial elite of the second order'; it was their job to oversee the institutionalization so that within a few years there was a 'developed system of doctrine, cult and organization'.⁴⁸ Holmberg estimates that this process was well underway at the time of Paul's visit to

³⁹ Weber does not precisely categorize the routinization as legal or tradition authority but Holmberg (1968, pp 164-166) argues convincingly that this is what is meant.

⁴⁰ Holmberg, 1978, p 159.

⁴¹ Holmberg, 1978, pp 175-181.

⁴² Holmberg, 1978, p 176.

⁴³ Holmberg, 1978, p 177.

⁴⁴ Holmberg, 1978, pp 200-202.

⁴⁵ Holmberg, 1978, p 179.

⁴⁶ Holmberg, 1978, pp 179-181.

⁴⁷ Holmberg, 1978, p 179.

⁴⁸ Holmberg, 1978, p 182.

Cephas (*Gal.* 1.18).⁴⁹ These apostles formed the highest level of authority and leadership and Paul strives, probably unsuccessfully, to be included within this higher echelon.⁵⁰ As new churches emerged in Antioch and Damascus, new leaders were required to oversee these developments. Thus itinerant leaders such as Barnabas were commissioned by the Jerusalem church to go out to these new communities. Paul, too, seemed to have itinerant missionaries working with him and responsible to him.⁵¹ These itinerant missionaries, accountable to the apostles, form the next layer of authority and leadership. The itinerant missionaries are not free to invent new teachings or customs (for instance *Gal.* 1.8; *1 Cor.* 14.37-38). Their authority is valid only when it conforms to that perceived as being in line with the teachings and customs of the founder. Paul may plant and Apollos may water but God makes things grow (*1 Cor.* 3.6); Paul may lay the foundations and others may build on them but no other foundation can be laid except the foundation which is Christ Jesus himself (*1 Cor.* 3.10). Even Paul himself fears he may be running or have run in vain if his gospel is not accepted by the church at Jerusalem (*Gal.* 2.2, 6), and not even Peter is immune from reprimand when he is perceived as deviating from the gospel of Jesus Christ (*Gal.* 2.14).

The final tier of Holmberg's church authority exists at the local level and is residential leadership and here the picture is more complex. This arises 'largely by itself' as people, using their charismatic and social talents, specialize with respect to their functions within the local community and this differentiation gradually becomes institutionalized.⁵² Commentators differ in the relative importance of charismatic and social talents in the emergence of local leadership. Campbell argues that it was predominantly from the ranks of those who already occupied a significant position in the wider society that the residential leadership evolved.⁵³ The general indication is that the first communities met as house churches (*Acts* 5.42; *1 Cor.* 16.15, 19; *Rom.* 16.5, 23; *Phm.* 1.2) and Campbell supposes that it would inevitably be the heads of the households who would be the leading figures at these meetings.⁵⁴ Holmberg presents a more even-handed assessment in allowing both charismatic and social leadership at the local level.

⁴⁹ Holmberg, 1978, p 183.

⁵⁰ This can be deduced from his insistence that he was commissioned directly by the risen Christ (*Gal.* 1.12 and 15-17; 2.6-9).

⁵¹ As Timothy (*1 Cor.* 4.17; *Phil.* 2.19; *1 Thess.* 3.2) or Titus (*2 Cor.* 8.6; 12.18).

⁵² Holmberg, 1978, p 198.

⁵³ Campbell, 1994, pp 120-126.

⁵⁴ Campbell, 1994, p 165.

He recognises that, in addition to the charismatic gifts such as prophecy which Paul is proud to note (*1 Thess.* 5.19-20; *1 Cor.* 11.4-5; 12.4-11, 28; 14.1-4, 31, 39; *Rom.* 12.6), he still requires a leadership from the higher echelons of society, for only these people can provide hospitality and accommodation of the whole community for the Lord's supper. Nonetheless, Holmberg seems to assume that Paul deliberately sought out prominent and wealthy householders to be leaders within the local church.⁵⁵ He, rightly, argues that, in intra-church leadership, some members would have greater opportunities for service than others. As an example he compares that position of a slave in a heathen household with that of a householder such as Stephanas at Corinth. Obviously Stephanas would have time, money and energy to expend in the service of the early church which would not be available to a slave. As these people were likely to be better educated, have administrative abilities and a position of influence in the wider community, it would be 'sociologically naïve' not to recognise that such people would emerge as leaders.⁵⁶

The reliance on the wealthier householders is probably right both because of the need of the house churches for hospitality but also because many of the roles within the early church of teaching, administration and care of the poor would require a degree of literacy and wealth. Holmberg, therefore, envisages charismatic members who teach and prophesy within local churches but also

another, not so clearly defined, [group] consisting of people with sufficient initiative, wealth and compassion to care for the sick and poor, to receive travelling missionaries and other Christians, to be able to accommodate the worshippers and the communal meals of the church in their own houses, sometimes travelling on behalf of the church and generally taking administrative responsibility.⁵⁷

These charismatic and administrative people together form the leadership at the level of the local, residential church. Horrell, too, proposes a mixed leadership within the earliest churches.⁵⁸ He warns against the view of Campbell that the heads of households formed the principal or only, form of leadership within the community.⁵⁹ While acknowledging

⁵⁵ Holmberg, 1978, pp 104-107.

⁵⁶ Holmberg, 1978, pp192-193.

⁵⁷ Holmberg, 1978, p 118.

⁵⁸ Horrell, 1999, pp 315-320.

⁵⁹ Campbell, 1994, p 126.

that such people was ‘clearly sometimes in dominant positions’, he argues that others within the household (slaves and freedmen) also occupied leading roles.⁶⁰

This concept of a mixed leadership seems best to fit the available evidence of the New Testament sources. It is difficult to envisage the early church communities surviving without the patronage of householders to provide hospitality, and the general ethos of the time would also attribute status to such people, but there is also evidence of significant status associated with the charismatic gifts.

1.2.3 The Emergence of Gentile Leadership in the Early Church

There is considerable evidence that Gentile believers were acting as leaders and occupying roles which conferred status and influence within groups at a very early stage in the history of the early church. Much of this evidence, as for most of the evidence of the early church in the New Testament, comes from Paul’s letters to the Pauline churches. In *1 Thessalonians*, a letter which is believed to be chronologically the first of the Pauline letters which have been preserved for us,⁶¹ Paul exhorts the believers of Thessalonica to respect those who

labour among you and are over (προΐστημι) you and admonish (νουθετέω) you in the Lord. (*1 Thess.* 5.12)

Thus there is the emergence of leaders of Gentile believers in this church.⁶² Paul seems to have spent only a short time in Thessalonica but he leaves behind some who are in a position to be ‘over’ the rest and to admonish them. In the *Letter to the Galatians*, too, there is evidence for the role of teacher in this Gentile community for

Let him who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches.’ (*Gal.* 6.6)⁶³

More evidence of leadership is available in *1 Corinthians*.⁶⁴ Paul lists a variety of gifts (χαρίσματα) which include healing, miracle-working, prophecy, glossolalia and

⁶⁰ Horrell, 1999, p 318.

⁶¹ Brown, 1997, p 456. Brown estimates the date of *1 Thess.* around 50 CE.

⁶² That this is a Gentile church is evident from Paul’s description of them as those who ‘turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God’ (*1 Thess.* 1.9).

⁶³ It can be argued that these are not Jewish believers brought in to lead the community for Paul tends to name the itinerant missionaries whom he sends to the churches (as in *Phil.* 2.25; *2 Cor.* 8.6; 12.18; *1 Cor.* 4.17; 16.10; *Phil.* 2.19; *1 Thess.* 3.2).

interpretation of glossolalia (*1 Cor.* 12.4-10). In this section, Paul is at pains to attribute some sort of equality to the various talents for all are members of the same body (*1 Cor.* 12.12) and these gifts are given for the benefit of the community. Later, however, Paul gives an order of priority to these gifts and claims God has appointed them

in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues. (*1 Cor.* 12.28)

Horrell argues that the gifts as listed and exercised ‘imply a certain degree of authority or leadership’.⁶⁵ Paul, himself, gives priority to prophecy rather than glossolalia (*1 Cor.* 14.5).

As detailed above, Holmberg attributes leadership to both charismatic and social differences and concludes that the various ministries came from within the group according to the talents and attributes of group members which emerged by ‘human initiative’ as and when the need for such attributes became apparent.⁶⁶ Certain function-holders had titles; there were deacons and overseers at Philippi (*Phil.* 1.1) and a female deacon at Cenchreae (*Rom.* 16.1). While Holmberg does not argue that these were official ‘offices’, he does conclude that ‘the mere existence of titles is in itself an indication of the permanency and general acknowledgment of a function’.⁶⁷ While Paul, himself, may not have actually conferred authority on group members,⁶⁸ he seems to have approved of certain members, whose *χαρίσματα* were acknowledged by the local church, becoming ‘function-bearers’ for the community.⁶⁹ Thus he recommends the community to be ‘subject’ to the household of Stephanas (*1 Cor.* 12.12) and to ‘respect’ those in authority over them at Thessalonica (*1 Thess.* 5.12). He must also have witnessed, presumably with a degree of approval, the prophesying, teaching and glossolalia taking place in meetings of the church at Corinth (*1 Cor.* 14. 23-32). Thus Holmberg infers that ‘institutionalization of authority’ took place by means of a consensus of the community, differing in detail from place to place, but with the approval

⁶⁴ The Corinthian church appears to have comprised Gentile converts (*1 Cor.* 12.2) although some may have been connected with the synagogue for Crispus, whom Paul baptized (*1 Cor.* 1.14), is described in *Acts* as an ἀρχισυνάγωγος (*Acts* 18.8).

⁶⁵ Horrell, 1999, p 317.

⁶⁶ Holmberg, 1978, pp 104-110.

⁶⁷ Holmberg, 1978, p 111.

⁶⁸ Except possibly in targeting heads of households who may function as host for community and Eucharistic meetings (Holmberg, 1978, p 191).

⁶⁹ Holmberg, 1978, p 109.

of Paul who, even if he did not formally instigate the authority, gave it legitimacy by his approval and contributed to the ‘consolidation ... of the institutionalization process’.⁷⁰

It is evident, therefore, that leadership, or at least role-bearers with status and influence, was an accepted practice in the Pauline churches from an early stage in the history of the early church. Paul appears to have been content with the emergence of Gentile leaders from the local communities which he founded. There is no evidence that he sought official approval for Gentile leaders from the Jerusalem church other than that which had already been conceded. Thus it seems reasonable to assume that the issue of Gentile leadership had already arisen before the establishment of later church communities such as those at Thessalonica or Corinth. The most obvious location for the emergence of Gentile leadership is Antioch for it was in that church that, according to Luke, a significant group of Gentile believers first gathered (*Acts* 11.19-21). It is the proposal of this study that Antioch was the origin of the first Gentile role-bearers and leaders. Further, it will be argued here that the emergence of leadership among the Gentiles was a major factor in the need to call the Jerusalem Conference (*Acts* 15; *Gal.* 2.1-10). With the emergence of leadership among Gentile believers, the issue of the status of the Gentile believers and their influence within the local church became critical for both Jews and Gentiles.

1.3 Methodology

The issues present in the Antiochene church prior to the Jerusalem Conference and at the Conference itself were essentially issues of group relationships. The main thrust of this thesis, therefore, is to use the tools and insights of social psychology to understand the group dynamics at work before, during and after the Jerusalem Conference. I shall argue that significant Gentile believers associated themselves with the church at Antioch forming a discrete subgroup within the church distinct from the Jewish believers. Among the Jewish believers also were distinct groups whose attitude to the Gentile believers differed – some (like Paul and Barnabas) accepted the Gentile believers as Gentiles while others (like the ‘false brethren’ of *Gal* 2.4 or the certain people who came from James in *Gal.* 2.12) required them to become Jews or, failing this, demanded restricted contact between Gentile and Jewish believers as illustrated by the ending of table fellowship

⁷⁰ Holmberg, 1978, p 195.

(Gal. 2.12-13). The discipline of social psychology studies group dynamics such as these. Social psychology is

the scientific investigation of how the thoughts, feelings and behaviour of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined or implied presence of others.⁷¹

In that social psychology studies, has as its basic unit, the individuals within their social grouping, it differs from sociology which studies the group itself as the basic unit.

Modern social psychology operates by gathering data in the relevant situations by interview, observation, field studies, laboratory experiments, etc.⁷² Obviously such approaches are unavailable when studying historical situations. In studying the past the only approach is to gather archival evidence from the literature and other sources of the period. This approach has disadvantages for the researcher has no control over the data available which may be biased or unreliable in some way, and the researcher is unable to react to the data by testing hypotheses within the relevant groups.⁷³ It cannot be denied that there are many problems associated with using archival material as data for sociological or socio-psychological analysis. Nevertheless, to understand and interpret the ancient sources adequately requires that the writers and the content of their writings be viewed in their historical and social context. To do less robs the interpretation of essential factors for its understanding.

1.3.1 Archival Sources

The relevant details of the church at Antioch and the Jerusalem Conference are found only in the New Testament, but the net of data collection can be cast more widely. As this thesis is utilizing the insights of social psychology to understand the group dynamics at Antioch and during the Jerusalem Conference, all data concerning the relationships between Jews and Gentiles are relevant. These are available from Jewish and Gentile sources outwith the New Testament. The use of these non-New Testament sources may alleviate some of the negative issues around the use of faith documents as source material. Use of more diverse archival material may also reduce, at least in some measure, the problem of incomplete or biased data sets.

⁷¹ Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, p 2.

⁷² Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, pp 6-13.

⁷³ Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, p 11.

1.3.1.1 New Testament Sources

The Jerusalem Conference, the events leading up to it and the subsequent effects of its decisions are recounted in either or both of *Acts of the Apostles* and Paul's *Letter to the Galatians*. In general, commentators regard the *Letter to the Galatians* as the more reliable account.⁷⁴ Firstly, it is an eyewitness account of the proceedings as both *Galatians* and *Acts* acknowledge that Paul was present as a delegate at the Conference (*Acts* 15.2; *Gal.* 2.1). Secondly, the historical accuracy of *Acts* is debatable (see below p 22) for Luke was attempting a theological history of the church whilst Paul's letters are a totally different genre and have the advantage of representing real situations in real time. Nonetheless, the interpretation of Paul's letters also requires caution for Paul had his own agenda in writing them. Commentators, while not going so far as to dispute Paul's account completely, regard it as 'tendentious',⁷⁵ or requiring 'naïve trust' in a personal testimony.⁷⁶ In this study Paul's *Letter to the Galatians* is given priority but, as Paul says nothing about the origins of the Antiochene church and little about the proceedings of the Jerusalem Conference, use must also be made of the evidence given in *Acts of the Apostles*.

1.3.1.1.1 The Letter to the Galatians

In the *Letter to the Galatians* Paul describes the Jerusalem Conference in just ten verses (*Gal.* 2.1-10). It is a section of the letter in which Paul is animated by his topic and, as a result, is not as lucid as he might have been.⁷⁷ For instance, at one point he refers to the 'false brothers' (ψευδαδελφοί) in pejorative terms.⁷⁸

But because of false believers secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might enslave us – we did not submit to them even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might always remain with you. (*Gal.* 2.4-5)

⁷⁴ For example Nickle, 1966, p 41; Betz, 1979, p 81; Brown and Meier, 1983, p 36; Segal, 1990, p 189; Taylor, 1992, pp 96-97; Zetterholm, 2003, p 143.

⁷⁵ Holmberg, 1978, p 14.

⁷⁶ Räisänen, 1983, p 232.

⁷⁷ Martyn, (1997, p 195), in discussing the ambiguities, describes Paul here as 'turning his attention to a group of actors who caused – and cause – an increase in his pulse rate'.

⁷⁸ They come to spy (κατασκοπῆσαι) and are secretly smuggled in (παρεισέρχονται). Witherington (1998a, p 136 n143) suggests that 'Paul has especially chosen these military/political terms because of the sort of rhetoric he wants to offer here'.

The verse is an anacoluthon and may be part of the Jerusalem narrative or may be a parenthesis referring back to a previous occasion. It is unclear whether Paul is referring to events in Jerusalem or Antioch. Opinion is divided.⁷⁹ His language also reflects his emotional commitment to his topic.⁸⁰ He not only mentions, in the most pejorative language, fellow believers as ψευδάδελφοί, but also refers to the principal apostles as οἱ δοκοῦντες εἶναι τι, but with the provision ὅποῖοι ποτε ἦσαν οὐδέν μοι διαφέρει (Gal. 2.6). In the opening sections of the *Letter to the Galatians*, Paul appears to be walking a narrow path;⁸¹ he aims to emphasize his independence from the Jerusalem church, claiming that his gospel came to him directly from Christ Jesus (Gal. 1.11-12; 15-17), but, at the same time, he wants to show that he is still preaching the same gospel as the Jerusalem apostles (Gal. 1.6-9). Thus, Paul's motives need to be borne in mind when dealing with this section; much of what he says is polemical and needs to be considered in the light of his motives and attitudes.⁸² Yet he was an eyewitness to, and participant in, the Jerusalem Conference and the only eyewitness to leave a written account.⁸³ For this reason his account must be given precedence and utmost consideration.

1.3.1.1.2 Acts of the Apostles

Acts of the Apostles is the second New Testament source to give an account of the Jerusalem Conference (Acts 15) and the events leading up to it. However, there are even more complications in using *Acts* as an historical source than there are in using the *Letter to the Galatians*. The value of *Acts* as an historical document has been questioned for various reasons.

⁷⁹ For example, Witherington (1998a, pp 135-136), Betz (1979, pp 88-89), Esler (1998, p 131) and Longenecker (1990, p 50) argue for a Jerusalem location for the 'spies' but Watson (1986, pp 50-51 and 2007, pp 104-105), Burton (1921, p 78), Bruce (1982 p 115), Taylor (1992, p 101) and Martyn (1997, p 196) suppose an Antiochene location. Walker (1992, p 506) also argues for an Antiochene location but times the incident prior to the Jerusalem Conference. My own opinion is that a previous occasion at Antioch is referred to here as it is more easily envisaged that such an occurrence of freedom should happen at Antioch than at Jerusalem.

⁸⁰ Dunn speculates that the anacoluthon may have been a Pauline ploy, serving 'Paul's polemic better than explicit details', but equally being 'the strength of his feeling overcoming his ability to express himself clearly' (1993, p 97).

⁸¹ Dunn (1993, p 102) says 'Paul was walking a narrow tightrope between affirming the Jerusalem apostles' authority and disowning it'.

⁸² So Holmberg (1978, p 18) says 'this report [Paul's account of the Jerusalem Conference] is not distinguished by its dispassionate objectivity', and Barclay (1987, pp 75-76) — 'this is no calm and rational conversation that we are overhearing, but a fierce piece of polemic in which Paul feels his whole identity and mission are threatened' (p 75).

⁸³ Holmberg, 1978, p 18.

1.3.1.1.2.1 Historicity of Acts

The historicity of *Acts* has been much debated. The inconsistencies within the text are obvious to anyone who reads the book with care. The Jerusalem Conference and its preceding events, the area of interest to this study, present some of the most obvious discrepancies. Previously, Luke has described the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch (*Acts* 8.27-39) who, being a eunuch, could not be a proselyte and so must be a Gentile. Later Luke described extensively the conversion of the Jewish sympathizer, Cornelius, and his household, emphasizing, in this case, that the authority for the baptism came directly *via* a revelation from God (*Acts* 10. 1-48). Further, when Peter recounts the events around the Cornelius conversion, the apostles and believers in Judea are convinced of the rightness of the baptism (*Acts* 11.1-18). Yet, despite these two Gentile conversions without circumcision, the issue of the Gentile believers and their adherence to the Torah is the principal topic of discussion at the Jerusalem Conference (*Acts* 15.1-29).⁸⁴

When comparison is made with the Pauline corpus, more discrepancies are evident. Paul designated Peter as ‘apostle to the circumcised’ (*Gal.* 2.7-9), whereas, in *Acts*, it is Peter who is entrusted with the conversion of the Gentiles (*Acts* 15.7).⁸⁵ The version of the Jerusalem Conference in *Acts* describes the ‘Apostolic Decree’ as the conditions placed on Gentile believers who receive baptism (*Acts* 15. 28-29) but Paul is emphatic that nothing was added to his Law-free gospel – except care of the poor (*Gal.* 2.6, 10).⁸⁶ The ‘Apostolic Decree’, itself, is reiterated later in the book with the implication that Paul knew nothing of it (*Acts* 21.25).⁸⁷ It is these and many other instances of differences which have called into question the historicity of *Acts*.⁸⁸

The Tübingen School, in particular Baur, argued that the Book of *Acts* represents propaganda literature written in the early second century to reconcile the two opposing and hostile gospels of Paul on the one hand and Peter, James and the Jerusalem

⁸⁴ Barrett, 2004, II, xxxvi-xxxviii.

⁸⁵ Barrett, 2004, II, xxxix.

⁸⁶ Zetterholm, 2003, p 143.

⁸⁷ Achtemeier, 1986, p 6.

⁸⁸ Further examples are given in Barrett, 1999a, pp 518-521.

church on the other hand.⁸⁹ A comparison of *Acts* with the letters of Paul drove Baur to conclude that

considering the great difference between the two statements, historical truth must be entirely on one side or the other.⁹⁰

However, a different approach was proposed by Dibelius who distinguished between Luke, the redactor, and the traditions he used in producing his volume. Dibelius noted that reports of journeys, places and people can be distinguished from ‘edifying stories’⁹¹ and that these stories are set in the outline of the journeys.⁹² As some of the people, places and names serve no further function in Luke’s storytelling, they are subsidiary to Luke’s purpose in writing the volume and, therefore, it seems unlikely that they are Lukan inventions. Luke, the redactor, weaves the stories he knows from the traditions into a volume which conforms to, and exemplifies, his own theological objectives. As Esler describes it, redaction

focuses on the role of the evangelists as authors in their own right, who have each expressed a particular theological viewpoint, rather than treating them as collectors of traditional material.⁹³

The ‘particular theological viewpoint’ of Luke is to demonstrate the spread of the gospel from ‘Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth’ (*Acts* 1.8). Luke traces the path of belief from the Jewish church in Jerusalem through the Samaritans and Jewish sympathizers to the Gentile believers.⁹⁴ The insight of Dibelius has the effect of shifting the focus from the historicity of *Acts* in its final form to the historicity of the traditions Luke used to write his work. Lüdemann has developed Dibelius’ theory to its logical conclusion and produced a ‘commentary’ on *Acts* which distinguishes the various traditions in *Acts* from Luke’s redacted interventions.⁹⁵ This present study employs the redaction/tradition approach of Dibelius and Lüdemann and

⁸⁹ There are reviews of Baur’s contribution by Lüdemann (1989b, pp 1-7) and Haenchen, 1971, pp 17-23.

⁹⁰ Baur quoted in Lüdemann, 1989b, p 5.

⁹¹ Conzelmann, 1987, p xxxix.

⁹² Dibelius, 1956, pp 102-108.

⁹³ Esler, 1987, p 3.

⁹⁴ Barrett, 2004, I, p 49.

⁹⁵ Lüdemann, 1989a.

regards the traditions used by Luke as historically useful sources. But this approach poses another problem – how to discern the original traditions from Luke’s redaction.

There have been many attempts to identify the sources/traditions Luke used in writing *Acts*. An early attempt by Harnack identified one obvious source as the ‘we’ section of *Acts* which begins at Chapter 16 (v. 10). Harnack identifies this with a personal travel journal kept by the author but he also posits several sources for the earlier part of the book:

an Antiochene-Jerusalem source (6.18, 4.11, 19-30, 12.25 [13.1]-15.35), a Jerusalem-Caesarean source (3.1-5, 16, 8.5-40, 9.31-11.18, 12.1-23), and an inferior Jerusalem source (2.5, 17-42), from around the same time as the Jerusalem-Antiochene source. Whether these sources were written (in Aramaic) or oral, one cannot be fully certain, for each assumption commends itself.⁹⁶

In general most commentators have followed Harnack’s proposed sources approximately although many debate the ‘we’ sections as directly derived from Luke. Thus Haenchen argues that, besides a possible travel journal covering the ‘we’ sections, Luke could have had access to oral and/or written traditions as he visited the various primitive church communities in Corinth, Philippi, Ephesus, Antioch and Jerusalem.⁹⁷ Conzelmann argues that, although linguistic studies have failed to identify separate sources, the uniformity of style does not prove that different sources were not used; he questions Luke as an eyewitness based on the ‘we’ passages but agrees with the possibility of sources connected with Jerusalem and Antioch.⁹⁸ Barrett assumes the presence of an Antiochene source.⁹⁹ He acknowledges that

there were sources of information, and their use provided not only information but at the same time the broad outline of the first part of *Acts*;¹⁰⁰

for Barrett those sources include: Philip, the evangelist, based on *Acts* 21.8; the Caesarean church; an Antiochene tradition and either Luke himself as a companion of

⁹⁶ Harnack, 1908, ch 6.

⁹⁷ Haenchen, 1971, pp 81-90.

⁹⁸ Conzelmann, 1987, pp xxxvi-xl.

⁹⁹ Barrett, 2004, II, pp xxiv-xxx.

¹⁰⁰ Barrett, 2004, I, p 52 and generally pp 49-56.

Paul or representing himself as such in the ‘we’ passages. Of particular interest in this study is an Antiochene source.

1.3.1.1.2.2 The Antiochene Source

References to Antioch occur frequently in the first half of *Acts* between chapters 11-15. In *Acts* 11.19 Luke tells of the Hellenists who fled to Antioch to escape the Jerusalem persecution and began to preach the Lord Jesus to the Greeks as well as Jews (*Acts* 11.20). Luke continues to relate how Barnabas came to Antioch from Jerusalem and how, in turn, Barnabas brought Paul, too, into the community (*Acts* 11.22-26). It was from Antioch that Paul and Barnabas set out on their first great missionary journey (*Acts* 13.2-14.26), but, when they returned to Antioch, the whole issue of the circumcision of Gentile believers was raised and eventually this led to the Jerusalem Conference described in chapter 15.

In Chapter 13 (v. 1) Luke provides a list of names of the ‘prophets and teachers’ at Antioch. With the exception of Paul and Barnabas, none of those named takes any further part in Luke’s narrative. Similarly, the list of places in *Acts* 13.19 would also indicate traditional material.¹⁰¹ As Dibelius pointed out, such inclusions seem unlikely to be the result of Lukan invention as they add nothing to his story but are, more probably, parts of traditional material available to Luke. All commentators, who accept the principle of an Antiochene source,¹⁰² ascribe *Acts* 13.1 to that source. However, the ascription of other parts of *Acts* to an Antiochene source is less certain. Thus Harnack assigned *Acts* 6.1 - 8.4, 11.19-30 and 12.25 – 15.35 to an Antioch-Jerusalem source.¹⁰³ Jeremias concurs with Harnack except he includes also 9.1–30 and 15.35-41 but excludes 14.29 – 15.34.¹⁰⁴ Bultmann assigns 6.1-8.4, 11.19-30 and 12.25 to the Antiochene source but does not include Paul’s conversion or the account of the Jerusalem Conference.¹⁰⁵ Benoit argues that Luke created a redacted piece which he inserted at 12.25 and 15.1-2

¹⁰¹ Lüdemann, 1989a, p 136.

¹⁰² These include Wendt (1913, pp 21-40), Jeremias (1966, pp 238-255), Harnack (1909, pp 162-202), Bultmann (1967, pp 412-423) and Lüdemann, 1989a, p 136.

¹⁰³ Harnack, 1909, pp 174-199.

¹⁰⁴ Jeremias, 1966, pp 238-255.

¹⁰⁵ Bultmann, 1967, pp 412-423.

such that 15.3 is then joined to 11.27-30 in the original Antiochene source (this means that the two journeys Luke describes here were actually a single journey).¹⁰⁶

Lüdemann, in his commentary on *Acts*, takes the approach of attributing sections of the book to redaction or tradition without necessarily citing a particular tradition or source.¹⁰⁷ He argues that, in sections such as 11.19-30 which tend to be summary in nature, Luke is using a variety of sources.

Not a single story is told, but a relatively large number of facts is set side by side. So we are probably not to take the whole passage as an extract from an Antiochene source ... but as the redactionary deployment of individual items which Luke found gathered in the communities and/or in one or more sources.¹⁰⁸

Verses such as *Acts* 13.1 and 19 are strongly suggestive of an Antiochene source and probably a written source in view of the detail.¹⁰⁹ However, even among passages of Lukan redaction there may be strands of traditions; thus Luke gives information on the famine of Judaea under Claudius that would not necessarily be part of the Antiochene source.¹¹⁰ Similarly Luke inserts the information that it was at Antioch that followers were first called 'Christians' (*Acts* 11.26). As Lüdemann argues, this is likely to be a strand of 'an isolated tradition', not necessarily the Antiochene source, which the author has inserted in the midst of his summary of the origin of the church at Antioch which was derived mainly from the Antiochene tradition.¹¹¹ It is this interpretation of the Lukan sources that is followed in this study. This thesis proceeds on the assumption that there was an historically useful Antiochene source which Luke used but there are also traditional sources interspersed within his redacted writing.

1.3.1.1.3 The Correlation of Galatians with Acts

In his *Letter to the Galatians* Paul recounts two visits to Jerusalem (*Gal.* 1.18; 2.1-10) after his conversion and there was probably an additional visit to deliver the collection

¹⁰⁶ Benoit, 1959, pp 778-792.

¹⁰⁷ Lüdemann, 1989a.

¹⁰⁸ Lüdemann, 1989a, p 136.

¹⁰⁹ Lüdemann, 1989a, pp 147, 157; Barrett, 2004, I, pp 602-604.

¹¹⁰ Lüdemann, 1989a, p 137.

¹¹¹ Lüdemann, 1989a, p 137.

(*Rom.* 15.25).¹¹² In contrast Luke describes five visits of Paul to Jerusalem (*Acts* 9.26, 11.30, 15.2, 18.22, 21.15-17). It seems evident, therefore, that there is not an exact correlation between the two works. In order to make some use of Luke's testimony as a source for the Jerusalem Conference and its prior events it is important to determine which Pauline visit matches that described in *Gal.* 2.1-10. Most commentators support the correlation of *Gal.* 2.1-10 with *Acts* 15,¹¹³ but a minority argues for a correlation with *Acts* 11.1-18,¹¹⁴ 11.27-30,¹¹⁵ or 18.22.¹¹⁶

The arguments in favour of a correlation with *Acts* 15 are numerous.

1. The topic for the meeting in both cases is Gentile membership of the early church and the need for adherence to the Torah (*Acts* 15 and *Gal.* 2.1-10).
2. The personnel are similar – Paul, Barnabas, Peter and James with, additionally, Titus and John in *Galatians* (2.1).
3. The meeting is called because of some believers who advocate Torah observance for Gentile believers (*Gal.* 2.4-5 and *Acts* 15.5).
4. Finally the debate was concluded with the agreement that Gentile believers need not become Torah observant (*Gal.* 2.9 and *Acts* 15.10-19).¹¹⁷

But there are anomalies too.

1. There are differences in the manner in which Paul is summoned to Jerusalem – by a revelation according to *Galatians* (2.2) and as a member of a delegation according to *Acts* (15.2)
2. According to Paul the meeting, during which agreement was reached, was a private affair (*Gal.* 2.2) while the version in *Acts* takes place before the apostles and elders (*Acts* 15.6) and the whole church (*Acts* 15.22).

¹¹² Lüdemann, 1989a, pp 5-6; Taylor, 1992, p 52.

¹¹³ Lightfoot, 1865, p 122; Burton, 1921, p 117; Conzelmann, 1987, p 121; Haenchen, 1971, p 64; Holmberg, 1978, p 18; Brown and Meier, 1983, pp 37-338; Taylor, 1992, pp 52-54.

¹¹⁴ Achtemeier, 1986, p 17.

¹¹⁵ Longenecker, 1990, pp lxxii-lxxxiii; Witherington, 1998b, pp 83, 375-377.

¹¹⁶ Jewett, 1979, pp 85-87; Lüdemann, 1984, p 149.

¹¹⁷ Lüdemann, 1989a, p 171; Jewett, 1979, pp 64-69.

3. Luke writes as though the Jerusalem Conference resolved the issue of the Gentile believers but the letters of Paul show continued dispute on this matter, as in Antioch (*Gal.* 2.11-14), Galatia (*Gal.* 6.12) and Philippi (*Phil.* 3.2). In particular the incident at Antioch seems to have occurred quite quickly after the agreement at Jerusalem according to *Galatians*.¹¹⁸
4. Paul stresses that ‘nothing’ (*Gal.* 2.6) was added to him (or his gospel) but, in *Acts*, the apostles impose the Apostolic Decree (*Acts* 15.28-29).

The first discrepancy can be explained by Paul’s polemical attitude in writing the *Letter to the Galatians*. He is walking a thin line both in trying to insist on his independence from the Jerusalem church as an apostle chosen by God (*Gal.* 1.15-17) and in confirming that his gospel was the same as that proclaimed by the Jerusalem church and supported by them (*Gal.* 2.7-8).¹¹⁹ It was, therefore, more fitting to his cause to claim a summons from God than from the church.

Those commentators, who opt for the earlier date, equating *Gal.* 2.1-10 with *Acts* 11.30, argue that *Acts* 11.30 fits best with Paul’s contention that the meeting was a private event and also allows for the amicable agreement between Paul, Barnabas, Peter and James.¹²⁰ They claim that the private meeting with Peter and James discussed and approved of Gentile membership of the church which was put into practice at Antioch. However, the practice at Antioch caused disputes which had to be resolved in the presence of the whole church (i.e. *Acts* 15). But there are a number of problems with identifying *Gal.* 2.1-10 with *Acts* 11.30. It is anomalous that Luke, with his interest in the spread of belief to the Gentiles, either knew nothing of the content of the discussions between Paul, Barnabas, Peter and James at *Acts* 11.30 (i.e. it was not part of the Antiochene tradition) or chose not to report it. Similarly, if, at the time of writing *Galatians*, Paul had known of the Jerusalem Conference, as reported at *Acts* 15, he would inevitably have mentioned the meeting for it served his purpose with the Galatians well – it resolved the dispute that Gentiles need not be circumcised. It is possible that, at the time of writing the *Letter to the Galatians*, the Jerusalem Conference has not taken place

¹¹⁸ Paul gives a specific time in years for the gaps in his narrative (*Gal.* 1.18 and 2.1) but links the Jerusalem Conference to the Antioch incident with Ὅτε δὲ (*Gal.* 2.11).

¹¹⁹ Dunn, 1993, p 102.

¹²⁰ For example Achtemeier, 1986, p 18; Longenecker, 1990, pp lxxx-lxxxiii.; Witherington, 1998b, pp 90-97 as recent commentators. A review of earlier attempts to equate *Gal.* 2.1-10 with *Acts* 11 is given by Jewett, 1979, pp 69-75.

but this would place an extremely late date on the Jerusalem Conference. Further, the probable date of the famine in Judaea makes Paul's seventeen year chronology in *Galatians* improbable and leaves little time for his complex journeys and imprisonment before his supposed closing of his eastern mission by about 57 CE.¹²¹

Lüdemann, who argues for a later date (i.e. *Acts* 18.22 or 21.15-17), overcomes the third objection by arguing that the Antioch incident preceded the Jerusalem Conference.¹²² He identifies the Jerusalem Conference of *Galatians* historically with *Acts* 18.22 but claims that, in his *Letter to the Galatians*, Paul reversed the incidents. However, it seems unlikely that Paul would be inaccurate at this point in his narrative for he was writing under oath (*Gal.* 1.20) about incidents which are well-known.¹²³ Furthermore, to place the Jerusalem Conference so late in the narrative means that it only took place after a substantial missionary effort in the eastern Roman Empire had already taken place (Paul's first three missions would have already occurred by this time according to *Acts*).¹²⁴ That the Antioch incident preceded the Jerusalem Conference is unlikely; it is more likely that the Jerusalem Conference did not provide a completely satisfactory resolution of the Gentile problem as is seen from the continuation of the problem in Galatia (6.12).

The problem of the Apostolic Decree is difficult but not insuperable; there have been some plausible explanations for the discrepancy. Many commentators believe that the Apostolic Decree postdates the Jerusalem Conference.¹²⁵ Catchpole contends that it was the Apostolic Decree that 'the people from James' brought to Antioch (*Gal.* 2.13).¹²⁶ Others argue that the Decree was later and that Paul only learnt of it at a later visit to Jerusalem (*Acts* 21.25).¹²⁷ Dunn also suggests that the stipulations of the Apostolic Decree were likely to have already been observed at Antioch if the Gentile believers were derived from 'sympathizers' to Judaism so that, even if the Decree did originate from the Jerusalem Conference, Paul was justified in claiming that the 'pillars'

¹²¹ Jewett, 1979, p 86.

¹²² Lüdemann, 1984, p 75. Munck (1959, pp 94-107) also supports this reversal.

¹²³ Longenecker, 1990, p lxxiii.

¹²⁴ Longenecker, 1990, p lxxvi.

¹²⁵ Nickle, 1966, p 67; Dunn, 1990, p 160; Taylor, 1992, p 140; Borgen, 1996, pp 237-239.

¹²⁶ Catchpole, 1977, p 442.

¹²⁷ Taylor, 1992, p 140.

added nothing to his gospel.¹²⁸ A later date for the decree seems most likely for the contents of the Decree – refraining from idolatry, sexual immorality, blood and meat from strangled animals – are insufficient to satisfy the concerns of conscientious Jewish believers opposed to table fellowship with Gentile believers (e.g. they make no reference to abstaining from pork).

The position taken in this study is that Paul's account of the Jerusalem Conference can be equated with that described by Luke in *Acts* 15. The correspondence of personnel, topic of debate and outcome of the meeting all coincide better with the visit described in *Acts* 15 than with any of the other visits of Paul to Jerusalem reported by Luke. These correspondences more than outweigh the problems of inconsistency which are present between the two accounts. In general, Paul's account, as an eye-witness account, deserves priority but some historical information, derived from the traditions available to Luke, may be gleaned from *Acts*.

1.3.1.2 Jewish Sources

Whilst only the New Testament gives accounts of the actual events under discussion in this thesis, other archival material can give important data regarding the group interactions at Antioch and Jerusalem. The perception of Gentile believers by Torah-observant Jewish believers is likely to reflect the perception of Gentiles by Law-abiding Jews, and Jewish literature of the Second Temple period can be helpful in illustrating how Jews stereotyped Gentiles, how they perceived the norms of their society and what characteristics they attributed to them.

The later books of the Old Testament and other Second Temple Jewish literature can provide useful data on inter-group relations between Jews and Gentiles of this period. Many of the books are dated around the first and second century BCE and CE and so are relevant to the period of interest of this thesis. Books such as *Joseph and Aseneth* and the *Letter of Aristeas* deal specifically with the problem of the interaction of Jews with Gentiles. Other works such as the Books of *Esther* and *Tobit*, *Book of Jubilees* and the *Sybilline Oracles* refer to the problem in places. These books do not give a uniform impression of the relations between Jews and Gentiles and so provide a range of attitudes around at the time.

¹²⁸ Dunn, 1990, p 160 and also Holmberg, 1998, p 405.

Unlike the Second Temple Jewish works, which are generally faith documents, there are also non-biblical works written about this time. Philo, living in the first half of the first century CE, writes as a Hellenized Jewish philosopher residing in Egypt. More particularly, Josephus writing around the end of the first century CE presents data concerning the history of the Jews at Antioch, some of which corresponds to the time of the establishment of the church at Antioch. Josephus also gives information regarding the relationship between Jews and Romans. He writes as a Jew who sympathized with the Romans and, when a general of the Jewish forces in Galilee, surrendered to the Roman army. Later he lived out his life in Rome as a Roman citizen under the patronage of Rome (*Vita* 423) and it was in Rome that he wrote his works. Thus Josephus writes as a Jew but for the Greco-Roman world,¹²⁹ trying to present Judaism as an ancient and venerable religion, aiming

to re-establish, maintain and secure the rights and position of the Jewish people within the Roman Empire in the precarious situation following the War in 66-70.¹³⁰

Mason elaborates on the social situation in which Josephus was writing. Whereas attitudes to the Jews had been ambiguous, when the Jews had rebelled against Roman rule in 66-74 CE there was retaliation with the massacre of thousands of Jews. With the crushing of the revolt, anti-Jewish feeling erupted throughout the Roman world and the Romans regarded the victory as a triumph for their own gods and traditions.¹³¹ In his first work, *Jewish War*, Josephus reconstructs the rebellion as the work of a few Jews whose behaviour was untypical and against the will of God. Thus Josephus aims to ameliorate the anti-Jewish writing and behaviour of the time.¹³² In *Jewish Antiquities*, Josephus emphasizes the 'great antiquity and nobility of the Jewish traditions' in an attempt to dispel the current misunderstandings of Judaism and the ridicule to which it had been exposed.¹³³ In his final work, *Against Apion*, Josephus counters the objections to Judaism by sarcastically demonstrating the contradictions they entail, before finally describing Moses and his laws in such a way as to show Moses as excelling the Greek philosophers in devising laws to cover the whole of life, and how these laws promote

¹²⁹ Bilde, 1988, p 200; Mason, 1992, pp 53-82.

¹³⁰ Bilde, 1988, pp 121-122.

¹³¹ Mason, 1992, p 56.

¹³² Mason, 1992, p 63.

¹³³ Mason, 1992, p 71.

pious and friendly relations among Jews and, contrary to Roman opinion, with the rest of the world too.¹³⁴ Josephus might, therefore, be expected to put a positive slant on relations between Jews and Gentiles; he may not have the impartiality and objectivity desirable in a historian.¹³⁵

Further data on Jewish/Gentile relationships can be gleaned from inscriptions of the period. Remnants remain of inscriptions from synagogues which list names of members and participants, some of these names appear to refer to Gentiles who are not proselytes and represent Gentile 'sympathizers'. Others name Gentiles as benefactors of the synagogues and indicate relationships between Gentiles and the synagogue.

1.3.1.3 Gentile Sources

The Gentile literature of the time also has references to the Jewish-Gentile relationships. Tacitus, in his *Histories*, makes several references to the Jews.¹³⁶ These show the stereotyping of Jews and, rightly or wrongly, what traits and characteristics were attributed to them by non-Jews. Similar stereotyping is evident in the *Satires* of Juvenal¹³⁷ and the *Discourses* of Epictetus.¹³⁸ In the analysis of group dynamics, such evidence of stereotyping and trait attribution is very useful data.

1.3.2 The Socio-Psychological Approach

Even using both Paul's letters and Luke's *Acts of the Apostles* the full details of the Jerusalem Conference and the events leading up to it are difficult to elucidate. However, these events involved groups interacting with each other. Social psychology, with its understanding of group dynamics, may provide insights to fill in some of the gaps or, at least, provide information of what might be possible for groups relating to each other under the circumstances such as were present in the early church at Antioch.

Zetterholm, in his book, *The Formation of Christianity at Antioch*, argues thus:

¹³⁴ Mason, 1992, pp 77-81.

¹³⁵ Bilde, 1988, p 204.

¹³⁶ Schäfer, 1997, pp 185-195; Stern, 1980, II, pp 1-93.

¹³⁷ Stern, 1980, II, pp 94-107; Schäfer (1997, p 185) claims that Juvenal was particularly alarmed by Jewish proselytism and exclusiveness.

¹³⁸ Stern, 1974, pp 541-544.

‘In order to create as plausible a reconstruction as possible when interpreting the sources, I intend to use the combination of 1) a basic, general theoretical perspective regarding society, 2) specific social-scientific theories used in empirical studies of modern societies, and 3) comparative material from antiquity. Through the reciprocity between these elements, we should be able to construct an interpretive frame that will help us understand literary and other sources that are related to the subject under discussion. When such material is scanty or even lacking, the model may help us to fill the gaps and create a plausible and testable reconstruction of history ... Using the perspective of sociology of knowledge makes it possible for us to make some important assumptions about peoples’ relation to each other and to the world surrounding them.’¹³⁹

Basically this approach of Zetterholm is the approach taken in this study.

1.3.2.1 Objections to the Use of Sociology in New Testament Research

This approach of Zetterholm is not universally accepted by all biblical scholars, even by those who adopt sociological tools for New Testament research. Holmberg opposes the idea of a sociological model as a ‘gap-filler where the data are not sufficient’.¹⁴⁰ He argues models do not represent reality exactly; they are abstractions or constructs and so cannot be used to predict ‘what must have happened or what must have been there when there is no evidence to say so’. Esler, too, objects to the idea of using ‘comparative material of whatever character’ because it ‘can never be relied upon to plug holes in our knowledge of the social world of the New Testament’.¹⁴¹ For Esler, comparative sociology can suggest new ways of approaching a topic or prompt new questions to ask of the text but cannot answer the questions. Nonetheless, it is difficult not to use models predictively. Although, in principle, Holmberg and Esler object to filling the gaps, in practice, both do seem to use their sociological models to fill gaps at times. Esler make much use of the model of Mediterranean social relations which were reliant on Honour and Shame to deduce that Paul’s taking of Titus to Jerusalem represented a challenge to the Jerusalem church.

¹³⁹ Zetterholm, 2003, p 13.

¹⁴⁰ Holmberg, 1990, p 15.

¹⁴¹ Esler, 1987, p 12.

By bringing Titus to Jerusalem, Paul was challenging the Jerusalem community; he was, in a literal sense, entering their social space ... some, at least, of the Israelite followers of Christ would have construed it negatively, as an attempt to elbow them from that space.¹⁴²

The deduction of hostility is derived from the model;¹⁴³ the text at *Gal.* 2.1 does not necessarily indicate aggression on Paul's part and even the claim that Titus was not compelled to be circumcised (*Gal.* 2.3) seems more likely to be a polemic against the Galatian situation rather than reflecting Paul's attitude at Jerusalem. Similarly, Holmberg's use of Weber's institutionalization of authority seems to influence his belief that Paul actively sought relatively wealthy householders to be leading figures in his congregations.¹⁴⁴ Again this assumption seems to go beyond the evidence of the texts.

Horrell presents a more direct attack on the use of models for biblical exegesis.¹⁴⁵ Firstly, he complains that the term, 'model', is used too broadly when sociology is utilised as a tool in biblical research, which obscures the differences between those who do use models and those 'who use other kinds of theoretically undergirded approaches'.¹⁴⁶ He suggests that the term 'theoretical framework' may be preferable.¹⁴⁷ Secondly, Horrell argues that starting with a model may lead a researcher to view the evidence in a particular way – a way which accords with the model, or assume that a certain type of behaviour must exist.¹⁴⁸ Horrell sides with those sociologists who value cultural diversity and human predictability rather than with those who aim to establish generalizations about human behaviour.¹⁴⁹

There seem to be two basic objections to the use of sociological research in biblical research.

¹⁴² Esler, 1998, pp 127-128.

¹⁴³ Horrell (2000, pp 91-93) argues 'the model not only supplies the understanding of Paul's methods and motives – such evidence being lacking in the text – but also 'trumps' without exegetical argument any other interpretation of the verse, since Esler's interpretation is based on what Mediterranean man would clearly do'.

¹⁴⁴ Holmberg, 1978, p 107.

¹⁴⁵ Horrell, 2000.

¹⁴⁶ Horrell, 2000, pp 89-93.

¹⁴⁷ Horrell, 2000, p 93.

¹⁴⁸ Horrell, 2000, pp 90-94.

¹⁴⁹ Horrell, 2000, pp 89-90.

1. that sociological tools are reductionist and do not allow for the divine or religious element of faith documents but attempt to explain everything sociologically/psychologically
2. that the ancient Mediterranean world is too remote from the twentieth century western world in which most sociological research is performed.¹⁵⁰

Further to the second objection, Judge, objecting to the early works of Holmberg and Theissen, lodged two significant complaints – that insufficient ground work had been done in testing the sociological models in the ancient Mediterranean setting before applying the models to biblical study and that it is impossible to test sociological models experimentally by field studies in a culture long gone.¹⁵¹ Rodd, too, has the same objections noted by Judge. He raises three important objections

1. The evidence is derived from faith documents
2. There are difficulties in transferring sociological models from the present day to more remote cultures.
3. The models cannot be tested in these remote and past cultures

He summaries his protest as follows:

There is a world of difference between sociology applied to contemporary society, where the researcher can test his theories against evidence which he collects, and historical sociology where he has only fossilized evidence that has been preserved by chance or for purposes very different from that of the sociologist.¹⁵²

Best, too, objects that archival data is not objective or complete; the data itself are also ‘interpretation representing current scholarly consensus but subject to continuing debate and revision’.¹⁵³ In addition Best expresses concerns regarding the problem of personal

¹⁵⁰ Esler, 1987, p 12.

¹⁵¹ Judge, 1980, pp 201-217.

¹⁵² Rodd, 1981, p 105.

¹⁵³ Best, 1983, p 188.

bias in the selection of the models to be used, for even 'objective' sociologists can select unconsciously those models which reflect their own culture and values.¹⁵⁴

The reductionist objection is not considered to be so important these days. Sociologists do not aim to explain completely social behaviour but aspire only to shed light on situations which can provide a partial explanation of a phenomenon.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, it is now readily recognised that the biblical writers lived within a particular time and culture and were, inevitably, influenced by that time and culture. *Dei Verbum*, the document released from the Second Vatican Council on Divine Revelation, acknowledges this.

[T]he exegetes must look for that meaning which the sacred writer, in a determined situation and given the circumstances of his time and culture, intended to express ... Rightly to understand what the sacred author wanted to affirm in his work, due attention must be paid both to the customary and characteristic patterns of perception, speech and narrative which prevailed at the age of the sacred writer, and to the conventions which the people of his time followed in their dealings with one another.¹⁵⁶

Thus, although biblical literature cannot be entirely reduced to physical explanations, to view biblical literature as above culture and society is clearly a mistake. Scroggs supports some application of the social sciences to biblical research, contending that without this application

the discipline of the theology of the New Testament ... operates out of a methodological docetism, as if believers had minds and spirits unconnected with their individual and corporate bodies.¹⁵⁷

The social sciences are necessary

as an effort to guard against ... a limitation of the reality of Christianity to an inner-spiritual, or objective cognitive system. In short, sociology of early Christianity wants to put body and soul together again.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ Best, 1983, p 189.

¹⁵⁵ Esler, 1987, p 12.

¹⁵⁶ Flannery, 1981, I, pp 757-758.

¹⁵⁷ Scroggs, 1980, p 165.

Best, too, argues for beginning

with the early believers in their concrete, historical reality rather than with an abstract 'early church' ... As opposed to the 'idealist fallacy', this means general acceptance of the sociology of knowledge approach.¹⁵⁹

Nonetheless, much of the New Testament literature is written from a faith perspective; it may be idealized and not reflect actual sociological situations. The letters of Paul are probably less susceptible to this criticism than are the gospel writings. Paul wrote in response to actual problems arising in definite situations. Thus the evidence of the Pauline letters may provide more direct evidence for sociological analysis than do the gospels. In terms of the use of *Acts of the Apostles*, it has already been acknowledged that Luke had a definite theological agenda which influenced his writing but that he used historical sources which did reflect the actual situation in a particular community (see pp 23ff). Paul's letters, therefore, may provide useful material for sociological analysis and, with a degree of care, *Acts* may also be helpful.

The practical problems posed by Judge and Rodd have greater force. The ancient Mediterranean world is somewhat remote from the twentieth/twenty-first century Western World and, being a past culture, is not amenable to current experimental research. Nonetheless, there are arguments for the use of sociological tools on New Testament situations. Esler argues that, although the differences prevent the application of sociological tools as laws, they can be used more modestly. Using comparisons with the physical sciences, he claims three levels of applicability – description, classification and explanation – the first two being present in the social sciences also.¹⁶⁰ Description and classification give rise to typologies and models and Esler argues that models thus formed can be used

to supply material for a distant comparison with a particular case ... Comparisons can suggest an entirely fresh way to approach this or that feature of the New Testament,

¹⁵⁸ Scroggs, 1980, pp 165-166.

¹⁵⁹ Best, 1983, p 183.

¹⁶⁰ Esler, 1987, p 6.

may suggest an entirely new range of questions to put to it, but the comparative method cannot prove the viability of that approach or answer those questions.¹⁶¹

This present study tends to go further in its use of socio-psychological tools than Esler advocates. So long as due precautions are taken to verify that there are ‘no cultural inconsistencies’ between the socio-psychological models and the data from the ancient Mediterranean world, it seems possible to go further than Esler and use the socio-psychological tools to suggest what was possible or even probable in given situations. This verification relies not only on the data from the New Testament but also on the larger resources of the Jewish and Gentile literature of the time, as Holmberg advocates.¹⁶²

The problem of inaccessibility in verifying experimental research by further investigation is not only a problem for the use of sociology in historical research. There are situations in current sociological and/or psychological research which are not amenable to systematic experimental verification for ethical or practical reasons. Thus, research into the effects of war or violence on people or groups of people can only be done by field studies and post-event case work. Planned experimental research is not possible in war situations. Social psychological theories about the correlations between biological gender and factors such as decision-making or aggression cannot be tested experimentally because biological gender is not open to manipulation. Similarly, hypotheses concerning the effects of being a victim of violence or of criminal attack on parameters such as self-esteem are not easily tested because there is no way of randomly but ethically assigning personnel to different experimental groups. Field studies are capable of yielding only correlations and, without the possibility of independently manipulating variables, it might be argued that it is not possible to derive cause-and-effect relationships from such studies.¹⁶³ Nonetheless, useful investigations are performed using field studies which can produce working models for understanding these conditions and predicting outcomes.

¹⁶¹ Esler, 1987, pp 11-12.

¹⁶² Holmberg, 1990, p 11.

¹⁶³ Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, p 11.

1.3.2.2 The Basics of Social Psychology

Social psychology is the science that studies individual beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours in settings where other people are present. The focus differs from *sociology*, where the basic unit of study is the *group* of people, but is closer to *psychology*, where *individuals* are studied; as such it works at a more basic level than sociology.¹⁶⁴ The focus of *social psychology* is the *individual* within the group. As such, it is an ideal discipline for studying those forces that change humans beings — their beliefs, their attitudes, and their behaviours.¹⁶⁵

Allport defined social psychology as

the scientific investigation of how the thoughts, feelings and behaviours of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined or implied presence of others.¹⁶⁶

Social psychologists investigate how the norms, prejudices, stereotypes, etc. adopted by the group influence the behaviours, thoughts and feelings of the individual within the group, irrespective of what these norms, prejudices, stereotypes actually are. Whereas sociology investigates what the norms, stereotypes, prejudices, etc. of the group actually are, social psychologists direct the attention to how the concept of norms, prejudices, stereotypes, etc. affects the behaviour of the individual. For example, sociologist may identify norms of a group as particular forms of face paint in a tribe or abstinence from pork meat in Judaism; social psychologists investigate how the norms of a group (whatever they are) affect the behaviour of group members such as the strength of adherence to these norms in maintaining the cohesion of the group; the norms differ but the reaction of individuals to those norms does not. Because social psychologists deal with concepts rather than the actualities, they aim to derive principles which can be tested by further experiment and which, if verified, can be universally applied across cultures.¹⁶⁷ The extent to which the insights of social psychology are universally applicable is still debated,¹⁶⁸ and this is addressed briefly below (see p 40).

¹⁶⁴ Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, p 6.

¹⁶⁵ Working Psychology at www.workingpsychology.com.

¹⁶⁶ Allport, 1954, p 5.

¹⁶⁷ Mann, 1980, p 199.

¹⁶⁸ Hogg and Vaughan, 2008.

1.3.2.3 Social Psychology across Cultures

In the main, research into the social psychology of groups has been conducted within a limited range of cultures and by Western experimenters. Although the aim of these experimenters has been to elucidate universal principles governing the behaviour, thoughts and feelings of individuals within a group, recently there have been questions regarding the application of these principles across diverse cultures and groupings.¹⁶⁹ Experimenters are now trying to address these cross-cultural problems. The extent to which social psychological principles are applicable across contemporary cultures may also alleviate the worries of applying these principles to past cultures such as the Mediterranean world at the time of the New Testament writers.

There are some reasons for optimism for using socio-psychological principles in studying the interactions of individuals in small groups such as the Antioch and Jerusalem churches of the first century. Throughout their lives individuals belong to small groups such as families, interest and association groupings, in which members interact personally and face-to-face. These natural groups can be found in all kinds of societies and at all levels of complexity. Groups give their members a sense of belonging and identity, as well as fulfilling social needs such as approval, friendship and recognition.¹⁷⁰ Groups also provide members with models of behaviour, for most groups have norms to which members are expected to adhere. These norms may vary with the group; in tribes it may be ways of hunting prey or application of body paint;¹⁷¹ in religious groups it may be Sabbath observance or food taboos;¹⁷² in interest groups it may be payment of subscriptions or attendance at meetings.¹⁷³ But the concept of the group norms is the same in all these cases. Indeed, the anthropologist, Coon, has claimed that natural groups are characteristic of all human beings everywhere. The difference between traditional and modern societies with respect to social groups is quantitative not qualitative; traditional societies had fewer and modern society more numerous groupings

¹⁶⁹ Mann, 1980, pp 155-156; Hogg and Vaughan, 2008, p 605.

¹⁷⁰ Mann, 1980, pp157-161; Duling, 1995, p 186.

¹⁷¹ The differences in body paint distinguish the various tribes for Maoris.

¹⁷² As in Judaism.

¹⁷³ E.g. golf clubs.

to which the individual has access.¹⁷⁴ The norms and biases of the group may differ but the effect of the norms on the behaviour of individuals in the group does not.

The stability of the group depends on members adhering to the norms, and conformity to group norms is important. It is in this area of conformity to group norms that most cross-cultural research had been done. Groups vary in the ways in which conformity is enforced; among the Zuni of New Mexico shaming and gossip are used to coerce obedience from deviant members; in Western societies criticism and the fear of rejection enforce conformity; in small agrarian societies (e.g. kibbutz) public opinion seems to maintain adherence.¹⁷⁵ Despite the variations in detail, the existence of group norms and the necessity to enforce them within the group appears to be universal and essential for the cohesion of the group. Experimentally the classic conformity test of Asch¹⁷⁶ showed similar results in different cultures: Brazil, Lebanon, Hong Kong, United States, China and Rhodesia (Bantu).¹⁷⁷

One area in which major cultural differences have been detected is in personality patterns. There appear to be major differences in self-understanding between the European/North American (Western) personality and that of the Eastern Asian/South American (Eastern). The Western personality tends to be more individualistic and independent whereas the Eastern personality is interdependent and communally orientated. In experimental tests aimed at measuring conformity and obedience to group norms Eastern subjects' test results were about 50% higher than those of Western subjects.¹⁷⁸ As an example Hogg and Vaughan describe the difference in self-description; Western subjects use personal elements such as 'I am kind', whereas the Eastern subjects are more prone to use elements of the collective self such as 'my co-workers think I am kind'.¹⁷⁹ These differences reflect a difference in the way the self is perceived; Eastern subjects conceive of the self mainly in relationship to others. These differences would imply that Eastern cultures would demonstrate greater conformity to group norms,

¹⁷⁴ Coon, 1946.

¹⁷⁵ Mann, 1980, pp 172-175.

¹⁷⁶ The Asch test measures the extent to which personally held beliefs are abandoned in the face of opposing beliefs expressed by the majority of the group members.

¹⁷⁷ Whittaker and Meade as cited in Mann, 1980, p 164.

¹⁷⁸ Lehman *et al*, 2004, pp 695-697; Smith *et al*, 2006, pp 127-147; Hogg and Vaughan, 2008, pp 613-618.

¹⁷⁹ Hogg and Vaughan, 2008, p 613.

greater obedience to group authority and greater dedication to maintaining group adhesion than Western cultures.

Although the cross-cultural studies go some way to estimating the universality of social psychological principles, they do not directly address the problem of past cultures. Some experimenters have attempted to attend to this problem by looking at the evolution of culture from a social psychological perspective. The consensus seems to be that communal behaviour evolved very early in human development, as Lehman *et al* observe

Solitude is dangerous; mutual supportive collective behaviour is beneficial both for survival and for sexual reproduction.¹⁸⁰

In the earliest hunter-gatherer societies, collective behaviour favoured successful food acquisition; once agrarian societies developed and specialization of functions evolved then individuals were no longer self-sufficient and became interdependent.¹⁸¹ Thus the group (or groups) became the natural form of identity. Indeed, it is the concept of the individual self that is a relatively new idea and seems to have developed only from the seventeenth century onwards.¹⁸² Secularization and industrialization meant that people were removed from their traditional groupings of family, religion and rural communities with their norms and value systems into other groupings with different norms and value systems, while the onset of the Enlightenment freed people to believe that they could forge better lives for themselves by throwing off traditional and orthodox values systems.¹⁸³ If this analysis is correct, then, for the period of this study, there should be significant group orientation and the principles of social psychology may be applicable to an investigation of the events surrounding the Jerusalem Conference and the Antioch dispute.

In the next chapter I shall describe more fully the specific insights of group psychology which I use in this study. I shall also attempt to validate their use by giving examples gleaned from the literature of the time.

¹⁸⁰ Lehman *et al.*, 2004, p 691.

¹⁸¹ Lenski, 1987.

¹⁸² Baumeister, 1987, pp 163-164.

¹⁸³ Hogg and Vaughan, 2008, p 112.

USING SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL TOOLS IN THE SITUATION OF THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN WORLD

2.1 Introduction

The approach taken in subsequent chapters of this thesis is to follow the Gentile believers chronologically as they begin their association with the church at Antioch, establish themselves as recognized members of the church, exert their influence as a minority subgroup of the Antiochene church, developing and using their own particular gifts as they become functionaries of the church (including leadership) and finally seek recognition for their position by the Mother Church of Jerusalem. In following this chronology, I shall make use of the insights of social psychology as they relate to:

- Group socialization describing the stages as an individual passing through a small group. The model covers entry into the group, continuation in the group and leaving the group in cases where groups have a limited existence.
- Minority influences within small groups
- Leadership within small groups
- Group identity with its emphasis on cohesion
- Groups in conflict

In this chapter I shall describe in some detail these processes as they apply to small groups. I shall also attempt to validate the use of these socio-psychological theories for studying the ancient Mediterranean world by citing examples of their application from the New Testament writings and from other available literature of the period. The examples are by no means exhaustive but aim to give evidence of the existence of these processes and so to justify their use in the thesis.

2.2 The Small Group

Before venturing into the process of group socialization it is necessary to define what is meant by a group in this context. Johnson and Johnson identified certain characteristics which they incorporate into their definition.

A group is two or more individuals in face-to-face interaction each aware of his or her membership in the group, each aware of the others who belong to the group and each aware of their positive interdependence as they strive to achieve mutual goals.¹

2.2.1 The Early Church

In general the group referred to in group socialization is a small group of people who know each other and meet on a regular basis – a definition which seems to suit the communities of the early church as described in *Acts* 2.46.

Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts,

or as Paul describes the church at Corinth

When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn; and let one interpret. But if there is no one to interpret, let them be silent in church and speak to themselves and to God. Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. If a revelation is made to someone else sitting nearby, let the first person be silent. (*I Cor.* 14.26).

The numbers involved appear to be small enough for meetings to take place within houses. Thus there were churches which met in the house of Priscilla and Aquila (*Rom.* 16.5; *I Cor.* 16.19), Nympha (*Col.* 4.15) and Philemon (*Plm.* 1.2) There appear to be a number of small group structures existing in the first century Mediterranean region which satisfy the definition for a small group and which have been proposed as models for the early church: the household, voluntary associations, the synagogue and philosophical

¹ Johnson and Johnson, 1987, p 8.

societies.² At this point I give a brief description only as the various groups will be discussed again later in the context of leadership (see pp 73ff).

2.2.2 The Household

The family or household was the basic grouping within society. A person's identity, status and honour were largely bound up with his/her familial origins.³ Involved in the family were the blood relations (both minors and adults), servants, slaves and even freedmen who retained an obligation to their former master.⁴ The household was the focus for the household cult and all members of the household took part in the rituals.

2.2.3 Voluntary Associations

Voluntary associations, guilds and clubs were widespread throughout the Graeco-Roman world, especially in the cities, as confirmed by numerous inscriptions. These were local associations which provided a forum for friendship and pursuit of common interests which might be lacking in other areas of Graeco-Roman society. Their growth may be attributed to the decrease in the bonds that bound an individual to the πόλις, dislocation of people as a result of increased trading abroad, importation of slaves and the Roman practice of relocating veterans in frontier cities. Some groups were based on a common trade or profession (silversmiths, carpenters, merchants etc.), some were based on common ethnic or geographic connections especially among immigrants, some were burial clubs, others met to pay homage to a particular deity (Dionysus, Bacchus) while others were based around private households and offered slaves and freedmen associated with the household a group identity.⁵ Harland has argued that there was social diversity within the groups. There was an inter-relatedness of social, religious and funerary functions and diversity with regard to wealth and status in these groups; occupational associations could be homogeneous with regard to status and wealth but others could reflect a spectrum of society with respect to wealth, status, citizenship and legal standing; some groups could be exclusively masculine or feminine while others would be mixed with regard to gender; many associations, not primarily family-based could be influenced

² Clarke, 2000, pp 1-5 and Meeks, 1983, pp 74-75.

³ Malina and Neyrey, 1991, pp 74-76; Esler, 1997, pp 122-128.

⁴ Meeks, 1983, pp 75-76; Esler, 1997, p 135.

⁵ Clarke, 2000, pp 62-65; Kloppenborg, 1996, pp 18-26; Harland, 2003, pp 28-53.

by household structures and language.⁶ One reason for the growth and popularity of the associations would appear to be the weakening of the previous ties with the polis and the family due to the increased ease of travel and the displacement of people as a result of the slave trade, trading with foreign territories and colonisation of frontier territories by the Romans.⁷ The groups offered displaced persons and others the opportunity for friendship, recreation, communal meals and drinking. There is evidence for associations based on ethnic and geographic origins; in Asia Romans and Italians came together in groups; associations on Rhodes consisted of people with common origin, such as Cretans, Pergaians and Sidonians.⁸

Whatever, the background to the formation of the associations, they all seem to have enjoyed an active social life. Banquets and festivals were enjoyed with much eating and drinking which could lead to drunkenness on occasions.⁹ Philo testifies to their existence and their social dimension when he disparagingly describes the clubs thus:

In the city there were clubs with a large membership, whose fellowship is founded on no sound principle but on strong liquor and drunkenness and sottish carousing and their offspring, wantonness. (*Against Flaccus* 136)

2.2.4 The Jewish Synagogues

The Jewish synagogue, itself, had much in common with a voluntary association.¹⁰ The traditional opinion that the synagogue was primarily involved in worship has now given way to a broader view of the activities connected with synagogues – religious, social and legal. Josephus gives some indication that the synagogue was the site of arbitration for the Jewish community. In *Jewish Antiquities* (14.10) where he is describing a series of decrees which show lenient dealings of the Jews, he presupposes that the Jews were well-organized with their own social structures and Levine supposes that this implies having

⁶ Harland, 2003, pp 28- 53.

⁷ Kloppenberg, 1996, pp 17-18.

⁸ Harland, 2003, p 34.

⁹ Harland, 2003, pp 74-84.

¹⁰ Richardson, 1996, pp 90-109 cf. pp 102-103.

places where they met for worship.¹¹ The presence of assembly places is explicit when Josephus refers to the decree of Lucius Antonius to Sardis regarding military service,¹²

Those Jews that are our fellow citizens of Rome, came to me, and demonstrated that they had an assembly of their own, according to the laws of their forefathers, and this from the beginning, as also a place of their own, wherein they determined their suits and controversies with one another. (*Jewish Antiquities* 14.235)

and then in a decree by the people of Sardis:

Whereas those Jews ... have come now into the senate, and desired of the people, that ... they may assemble together, according to their ancient legal custom, and that we will not bring any suit against them about it; and that a place may be given to them where they may have their congregations, with their wives and children, and may offer, as did their forefathers, their prayers and sacrifices to God. (*Jewish Antiquities* 14.259-261)

A general edict of Augustus to the Jews of Asia Minor from 12 BCE is relevant:

And if anyone is caught stealing sacred books or sacred monies from a Sabbath-house [σαββατεῖον] or a banquet hall [ἀνδρών], he shall be regarded as sacrilegious, and his property shall be confiscated to the public treasury of the Romans. (*Jewish Antiquities* 16.164)

Josephus refers to an early synagogue at Antioch (*Jewish War*, 7.44) which was restored and rededicated to the Jews after the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes. If correct, this indicates that there was a synagogue building in Antioch before 64 BCE.¹³ Literary and inscriptional evidence suggest that the synagogues were used for a variety of social events. They were buildings for sharing meals, observing Sabbaths and other feasts, collecting Temple taxes, teaching children and hearing civil cases.¹⁴ The Theodotus inscription suggests that a synagogue in Jerusalem in the first century CE was also used as a hostel for Jewish travellers.¹⁵

¹¹ Levine, 2005, pp 113-114.

¹² Richardson, 1996, p 95.

¹³ Richardson, 1996, p 96.

¹⁴ Richardson, 1996, p 103.

¹⁵ Clarke, 2000, p 124.

and also the strangers' lodging and the chambers and conveniences of water for an inn for them that need it from abroad.¹⁶

2.2.5 The Philosophical Societies

Philosophical schools existed in Graeco-Roman society as early as 6 BCE and groups gathered round philosophers such as Pythagoras, Plato, Diogenes and Aristotle.¹⁷ The organization of the schools compares best with the 'Great Man' form of leadership (see pp 11 & 77). The founder of the school was revered, miraculous events were attributed to him and the work of his disciples was to pass on his words and thoughts. When the great man died, a successor was appointed who continued his work by passing on his tradition.¹⁸

2.3 Group Socialization: The Five Stages of Passage

Moreland and Levine, in a series of studies, have attempted to describe a model of group socialization which defines the dynamic process by which an individual progresses through a group; beginning with entry, continuing with maintenance in the group and ending with divergence for those groups which exist for limited periods only or for those members whose expectations of the group are not fulfilled.¹⁹ They have identified five stages of the passage.²⁰

2.3.1 Investigation

This is the period of recruitment on the part of the group and of exploration on the part of the individual interested in joining the group. Each are sizing the other up, investigating the extent to which the expectations of each will be fulfilled if there is a decision to join the group.²¹ The group evaluates the contribution the individual might make to the group – the expertise or prestige that the individual might bring to the group. The individual evaluates the extent to which the group will benefit him/her – how the group will fulfil

¹⁶ *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum*, 1404; translation from Campbell, 1994, p 47.

¹⁷ Mason, 1996, p 31.

¹⁸ Mason, 1996, p 32.

¹⁹ Moreland and Levine, 1982, pp 137-192; 1984, pp 181-195; Moreland *et al.*, 1994, pp 527-555; Levine and Moreland, 1994, pp 305-336 which are summarized, to some extent, in Levine *et al.*, 2001, pp 86-106.

²⁰ Moreland and Levine, 1982, pp 137-192.

²¹ Levine *et al.*, 2001, pp 88-89.

his/her needs, desires and expectations.²² If, after investigation, both parties see some mutual benefits from further association then the individual enters the group.

1 Cor. 14.23 may provide an example of this investigation period in the church at Corinth where unbelievers appear to be onlookers at liturgies who would be confused at the spectacle of speaking in tongues. Luke provides another example of this investigation process when he describes how Cornelius invited Peter to visit his house (*Acts* 10.17-33). About a century later Justin Martyr describes how converts are instructed prior to their baptism by a group of people who accompany them with prayer and fasting. The new converts have to convince these people of their good intentions and commitment to the new group before being initiated into the full community of believers.

As many as are persuaded and believe that the things we teach are true; and undertake to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and ask God with fasting for remission of past sins, while we pray and fast with them. (*First Apology*, 61)

Only after their baptism are the new believers allowed to join the main body of the community.

But we, after thus washing the one who has been convinced and has assented [to our instruction], lead him to those who are called brethren, where they are assembled. (*First Apology*, 65)

A similar, if less intensive, period of investigation seemed to occur with some voluntary associations. Admission to the association of Iobacchi was gained by means of a vote of the existing members which indicates that the membership had the opportunity to get to know prospective members prior to their election.²³ Application to join the group was also formal, for prospective members were required to apply in writing for membership.²⁴ The applicant lodged with the priest the notice of candidature which was then

²² Moreland and Levine, 1982, pp 156-159.

²³ Tod, 1932, p 85. Tod gives an extensive extract from the minutes of the Attica society of Iobacchi which gives valuable information about the running of the group.

²⁴ Baumgarten, 1998, p 108.

approved by a vote of the Iobacchi as being clearly a worthy and suitable member of the Bacchic Society.²⁵

A burial society at Lanuvium insisted that new members ‘read the by-laws carefully’ so that they were aware of the privileges to which they were entitled, hence avoiding disputes in the future.²⁶

2.3.2 Socialization

The new members start to be assimilated into the group. This is a time of adjustment on both parts. The group will attempt to change the new member by educating the individual in the attitudes and behaviour expected of group members.²⁷ On the other hand, in the Moreland and Levine model, the new members will attempt to get the group to adapt to their own outlook.²⁸ To the extent that the group foresees future benefits from the membership of the individual, it will be prepared to modify its attitudes and behaviour to accommodate the new member.²⁹ This can enable a valued new member to exert influence on the group and bring about innovations.³⁰ If this period of socialization is successful the new member is accepted fully into the group.

Paul lists the expected behaviour of believers in *Gal.* 5.22, contrasting this behaviour with the former behaviour of pagans (*Gal.* 5.19-21). A similar contrast of previous, compared to present, expected behaviour is seen in *Rom.* 6.19 and 11.13.³¹ Although Luke in *Acts* depicts baptism as occurring immediately after conversion (as 8.27-39; 10.44-47; 16.30-34), there is reason to suppose that the brevity reflects his ideology of the pre-eminence of the Spirit and that he has allowed himself to ‘shorten the perspective, to reduce and to simplify’³² and that a period of instruction was normal prior to baptism. Hartman notes the factions evident at Corinth (*1 Cor.* 1.12-17) and interprets

²⁵ Tod, 1932, p 87.

²⁶ Baumgarten, 1998, p 108.

²⁷ Moreland and Levine, 1982, pp 161-163.

²⁸ Levine *et al.*, 2001, pp 90-91.

²⁹ Moreland and Levine, 1982, pp 163-164.

³⁰ Levine *et al.*, 2001, pp 90-100.

³¹ Similar contrasts are seen in *Gal.* 4.8 and *1 Thess.* 1.9-10.

³² Hartman, 1997, p 141.

these as reflecting the influences of those who initiated and baptized the converts following Paul's evangelisation.³³

In the voluntary associations, too, there appears to be a period of socialization. Members of the Iobacchi club were expected to conform to definite rules of behaviour such as preserving 'good order and quietness' and not causing any sort of disturbance during meetings,³⁴ refraining from fighting or even occupying another member's seat,³⁵ refraining from giving a speech without permission of the priest.³⁶ For the various misdemeanours there were fixed penalties. For more serious breaches of discipline, a general meeting of the group would be called and a suitable penalty imposed. The penalties varied from fines to periods of exclusion from the group and, in serious cases or if the appropriate fine was not paid, members could be excluded completely from the group.³⁷

2.3.3 Maintenance

During the maintenance period, the individual and the group are totally committed to each other. As a full member of the group the individual now has all the responsibilities and advantages conferred by group membership. A period of role negotiation takes place. The group seeks to use the expertise of the new member to its own advantage, finding roles that maximize the contribution that the individual can make to the group.³⁸ The individual also seeks a personal role within the group for the status and prestige that such a role can give. The individual seeks to maximize the satisfaction which the group provides whilst minimizing the demands that the group will make on the individual.³⁹ This tends to be a period of 'role differentiation' and a period for compromises based on

³³ Hartman, 1997 pp 59-60.

³⁴ Tod, 1932, p 88.

³⁵ Tod, 1932, p 89.

³⁶ Tod, 1932, p 90.

³⁷ Tod, 1932, pp 88-80.

³⁸ Moreland and Levine, 1982, pp 167- 169. This is the period during which the full member may achieve the most prestigious of roles – that of leader.

³⁹ Moreland and Levine, 1982, p 169. Moreland and Levine (1982, p 170) stress that a 'full member's commitment to the group depends primarily on the rewardingness of his or her special role. To the extent that the role is unrewarding, the individual will become less committed to the group.'

the assessment of the individual's talents by the group and the amount of satisfaction that undertaking a new role will bring to the individual.⁴⁰

Paul lists some of these possible roles in *1 Cor.* 12.28, and the respect attendant upon occupying such roles is evident from Paul's directives to the Corinthians (*1 Cor.* 16.15-16) and to the Thessalonians (*1 Thess.* 5.12). The acknowledgement that each person has different gifts to offer to the group is also evident. Paul summarizes this development admirably:

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses. (*1 Cor.* 12.7-11).

The voluntary associations enabled those individuals, who were not among the elite of society, to use their skills and exercise functions within the group and, by so doing, to occupy positions of honour, privilege and prestige. The voluntary associations structured themselves on civic principles and members could occupy and fulfil official positions, rejoicing in the titles of *magister*, *curator*, *pater collegii*, *quinquennalis*, etc.⁴¹ There were privileges attached to official leadership positions; officials often benefited from larger portions of food at banquets than the ordinary members and ordinary members who insulted the *quinquennalis* at dinner were fined twice the amount charged for insulting a fellow member.⁴² The *quinquennalis* at Lanuvium, Italy, also had the honour of officiating at religious rites.⁴³ In addition to the roles of leadership, there were other offices to be filled. The Iobacchi club appointed a treasurer by ballot of the members and this treasurer, in turn, could appoint his own secretary.⁴⁴ At a more

⁴⁰ Moreland and Levine, 1982, p 167.

⁴¹ Clarke, 2000, p 68; Kloppenborg, 1996, p 26; Lendon, 1997, p 97.

⁴² Lendon, 1997, p 98.

⁴³ *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* 14.2112 second century CE.

⁴⁴ Tod, 1932, p 91.

mundane level, ‘horses’ were appointed to keep the peace in the group and evict any whose behaviour became belligerent.⁴⁵

2.3.4 Resocialization

In some groups the natural course of events is divergence and exit as, for example, is the case for students at a college or university – they expect their contact with a group to finish at the end of their course of studies – ‘expected divergence’; in other groups divergence and exit can be the result of dissatisfaction with or by the group – ‘unexpected divergence’.⁴⁶ Sometimes the individual is disappointed by the group which does not live up to the individual’s expectations, or the group has expectations of behaviour which conflict with the individual’s basic beliefs and disposition.⁴⁷ The period of role negotiation can sometimes lead to divergence; the individual, who now has increased influence, may attempt to change the group beyond that acceptable to some of the older members; some reallocation of roles can become the basis of a threat to older members. Disappointment can emerge and dissatisfaction with the group or the member’s position in the group can lead to divergence and marginalizing of the member.⁴⁸ If that member is important to the group, the group will attempt to rectify the causes of dissatisfaction and restore full commitment to the group so reinstating full membership. However, if the dissatisfaction is not overcome then the member is likely to separate from the group.⁴⁹

In general, membership of the early church communities was for life so ‘expected divergence’ is irrelevant but dissatisfaction could result in ‘unexpected divergence’ from the group. Paul’s dissatisfaction with Peter’s behaviour in *Gal.* 2.11-14 is probably an example of dissatisfaction with group behaviour and attitudes leading to Paul’s divergence from the group at Antioch. There are probably signs of a split (either in process or which has already occurred) based on the doctrine of meaning of Christ’s

⁴⁵ Tod, 1932, p 91.

⁴⁶ Moreland and Levine, 1982, p 171. Unexpected divergence often leads to the exiting individual being labelled as ‘deviant’.

⁴⁷ Sani, Reicher and Todman have studied this phenomenon looking at the schismatics in the Church of England following the ordination of woman priests (Sani and Reicher, 2000, pp 95-112; Sani and Todman, 2002, pp 1647-1655) and Sani and Reicher (1998, pp 623-645) in the Italian Communist Party following its split into two separate parties in 1991.

⁴⁸ Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, p 292.

⁴⁹ Moreland and Levine, 1982, pp 170-173.

body and blood in *Jn.* 6.53-66 (especially v 66) where some disciples found the teaching difficult and no longer went around with Jesus.⁵⁰

2.3.5 Remembrance

If the member separates from the group both the member and the group remember the past and reflect upon it. The experience becomes part of the tradition of the group. If the remembrance of the parting results in negative memories, there is sometimes a (partial) rewriting of the history of the events to give a different slant to the happenings.⁵¹ If the Crypto-Christians of *Jn.* (6.53-66) had already left the Johannine community we may be seeing this phenomenon in operation in John's gospel.

In the course of the passage of an individual through these phases of group belonging, Moreland and Levine detected three processes which occurred throughout the various stages.⁵²

2.3.6 Evaluation

This is the continual assessment, occurring at all stages of the transit through a group, by both the group and the individual, of the extent to which both group and individual can succeed or are succeeding in fulfilling their respective expectations and needs.⁵³ If the overall evaluation is positive (i.e. if the group is meeting the expectations of the individual more than other groups might be expected to do or if the individual is fulfilling the expectations of the group) then approval is expressed. If, however, the evaluation is negative on either side, action is taken to modify either the behaviour and/or attitudes of the group or individual. If these fail, rejection of the group by the individual or individual by the group may occur. The evaluation is continuous because the expectations of both parties can change during group socialization and maintenance. The new member may be concerned primarily with acceptance from the group but the

⁵⁰ Brown (1979, p 74) regards 'Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him' as a suggestion that 'here John refers to Jewish Christians who are no longer to be considered true believers because they do not share John's view of the eucharist'.

⁵¹ Moreland and Levine, 1982, 173-175.

⁵² Moreland and Levine, 1982, pp 140-155.

⁵³ Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, p 290.

evaluation of a full member may involve the extent to which he/she is being allowed to fulfil their potential by functioning in some recognisable and responsible role.⁵⁴

2.3.7 Commitment

A positive evaluation by the group or individual will result in increased commitment to the group by the individual and *vice versa*. The more commitment there is from both parties the more the group will function effectively in attaining its common goals and ideals. Where there is an imbalance in the level of commitment, efforts are made to re-establish a balance. Thus a valued member who shows a reduced commitment to the group will elicit an increased effort from the group to re-establish a higher level of commitment, often by the group compromising its traditional attitudes and behaviour to meet more accurately the needs of the individual.⁵⁵ This endows the member with greater power over the group. On the other hand the individual who desires to remain within a group which has a reduced level of commitment to that individual will be more anxious to comply with all the attitudes and behaviour normative for the group and will be less inclined to deviate in any way. This endows the group with greater power over the individual.⁵⁶

2.3.8 Role Transition

The passage of an individual from one stage in the group socialization to the next can be a cause of conflict and uncertainty within a group. There is a discontinuity of roles, and decisions have to be made on whether these role transitions should occur or have already occurred. To 'minimize errors regarding their reciprocal rights and obligations' the various stages of role transition are often formal and public.⁵⁷ Of particular importance are those connected with entry into the group and these take the form of rites of passage. These rites of passage can become ritualized and become important events in the life of the group.⁵⁸ They symbolize a change in attitude to the individual by the group and a change in status of the member. They can also symbolize, for the new member, the

⁵⁴ Moreland and Levine, 1982, pp 140-144.

⁵⁵ Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, p 290; Levine *et al.*, 2001, pp 90-100.

⁵⁶ Moreland and Levine, 1982, pp 145-148.

⁵⁷ Moreland and Levine, 1982, pp 149-151.

⁵⁸ Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, p 292.

expectations of the group of a change in attitudes and behaviour to conform to the normative standards of the group.⁵⁹

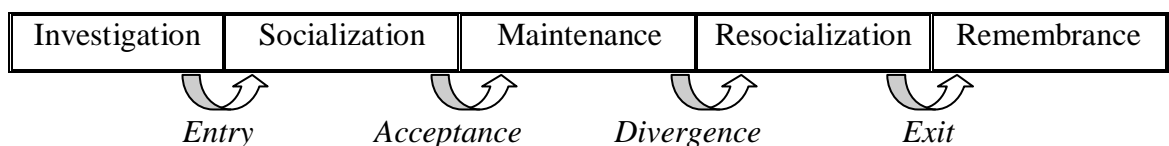
Baptism is an obvious example of such a rite of passage in the early church. It marked the initiation to full membership of the early church. Paul's description of baptism as a dying with Christ (*Rom.* 6.3-4) or a clothing oneself with Christ (*Gal.* 3.27) are vivid symbols of the role transition and new expectations associated with entry into the early church community. In a similar way, circumcision was, and still is, the principal rite of initiation for males into Judaism. It, too, involved the obligation to keep the observances of Judaism such as Sabbath observance (*Gal.* 5.3).

The voluntary associations also had initiation rituals. The Bacchic associations had certain days of initiation every year. Livy complained

Minucius and Herrenius, both surnamed Cerrinius; changed the time of celebration, from day to night; and, instead of three days in the year, appointed five days of initiation, in each month. (*History of Rome*, 39.13)

Other associations initiated new members by requiring the swearing of oaths to keep the regulations of the group and presenting membership cards.⁶⁰

The whole process can be represented diagrammatically as shown below where the transition from one stage to the next stage may be, but is not always, marked by an appropriate rite of passage.⁶¹



This is an idealized representation and substantial modifications can occur. For example, the principal initiation rite may take place soon after investigation and the socialization and maintenance phases merge into one; the entry into some of the voluntary associations may follow this course when the newly initiated members are presented with the rules of the association at their initiation. In contrast, much of the socialization may take place

⁵⁹ Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, p 291; Moreland and Levine, 1982, pp 149-151.

⁶⁰ Tod, 1932, p 85.

⁶¹ Adapted from Levine *et al.*, 2001, p 88.

during the investigation stage so that the rites of passage of *entry* and *acceptance* are combined into a single initiation rite.⁶² Judaism may provide a suitable example here for circumcision seems to represent the initiation into full membership. In the example of students at college both entry and acceptance are marked by the same rite of passage – matriculation, but it is the final *exit* which is the most significant rite of passage – graduation. But, within most social groups, initiation is the principal rite of passage, for exit tends to represent dissatisfaction and failure of the group in some way.

2.4 Minority Influences within Small Groups

Harland has pointed out that when new members enter a group, such as the Graeco-Roman associations, assimilation and acculturation occur.⁶³ But assimilation is a two-way process; individuals affect the group just as the group affects the individual.

The entrance of a new individual member into a group with a distinctive cultural complex could be part of this cultural exchange. All individuals, social-scientific studies emphasize, are *culture carriers* who bring with them a set of cultural traits pertaining to a particular way of life and world view.⁶⁴

In the case of Gentiles joining an early church community, Harland claims that the Gentile will undergo ‘enculturation’ into the cultural complex of the new group, but there will be potential modifications to some of the specific elements of the new group too, especially when other Gentiles join and interact with fellow members. One effect of this two-way ‘enculturation’ would be to influence the cultural assimilation of the group with regard to the wider society.⁶⁵

At some points in the Moreland and Levine model there are opportunities for the new members to introduce innovation into their new group as a whole and to exert influence. These opportunities arise mainly during the *socialization* process and during *maintenance*.

⁶² Hogg and Vaughan, 2002.

⁶³ Harland, 2003, pp 195-200.

⁶⁴ Harland, 2003, p 198.

⁶⁵ Harland, 2003, pp 198-199.

2.4.1 Innovation during the Socialization Process

The socialization phase of group development can have important consequences for both the new member and the ‘old-timers’ of the group and these can be both intended and unintended as well as susceptible to external environmental factors.⁶⁶ Early work on the socialization process assumed that the main influence was from the group on the new members, but more recent evidence recognizes that the new members themselves can play an active role in influencing the future of the group.⁶⁷

2.4.1.1 Unintended Innovation

Even if the new members are not intending to bring about any change in the group which they are entering, they can bring about innovation unintentionally. When the ‘old-timers’ find themselves in the position of transmitting elements of the group culture to newcomers, it can provoke deeper thought about this culture.⁶⁸ They may discover inconsistencies between their beliefs and practices which had not been apparent before. Even if there are no inconsistencies in the belief systems of the ‘old-timers’, there may emerge an appreciation that certain cultural elements are likely to prove difficult to transmit to newcomers.⁶⁹ Furthermore, the actual communication of the culture – the very verbalization of it – can affect the understanding of the ‘old-timer’, especially if the newcomer is interested and expresses this interest with questions. In addition, if the desire to assimilate the newcomer is great, then the ‘old-timers’ may be prepared to be accommodating to the needs of the newcomer, even when these are not expressed directly. ‘Old-timers’ may anticipate the needs of the newcomers and try to accommodate them. To the extent that the ‘old-timers’ anticipate these needs correctly they can facilitate socialization.⁷⁰ Finally newcomers can change the way in which ‘old-timers’ relate to other out-groups. When newcomers are perceived as coming from an out-group, the previously hostile attitudes to that out-group may be mitigated.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Levine *et al.*, 2001, pp 90-91.

⁶⁷ Feldman, 1994, pp 213-233; Saks and Ashford, 1997, pp 234-279.

⁶⁸ Feldman, 1994, p 227.

⁶⁹ Levine *et al.*, 2001, pp 91-92.

⁷⁰ Levine *et al.*, 2001, pp 91-92.

⁷¹ Levine *et al.*, 2001, p 94.

2.4.1.2 Intentional Innovation

Newcomers who are perceived to have attributes and abilities which are useful to, or desired by, the group will be accommodated by 'old-timers' more readily than those lacking in these attributes. In such cases the 'old-timers' may be prepared to make changes to attract the people with these desirable attributes to the group and to retain those who express interest.⁷² Newcomers, whose social status in wider society is high, are socialized more easily than those with lower external status. This is particularly true where alternative group affiliation is possible. If newcomers are free to leave the group to join alternative, more attractive, groups, then the 'old-timers' might be more prepared to accommodate change in order to ensure that they retain them.⁷³ Newcomers with high social status in the wider world will be welcomed eagerly. High status newcomers bring valuable assets with them to the group such as prestige and honour, which means that they are perceived as being more competent and effective, and hence are more likely to bring about the group's aims and objectives than low status newcomers.⁷⁴ Finally, high status newcomers behave and express themselves more effectively than do low status newcomers which results in attribution to them of general abilities.⁷⁵

The size of the contingent of newcomers can also determine the innovations which accompany their entry into the group. When newcomers enter as individuals, they are initiated on a one-to-one basis, providing the 'old-timers' with more control over the initiation process.⁷⁶ The enthusiastic newcomer can be anxious not to violate the expectations of the 'old-timers' and is, therefore, generally more inhibited and compliant, not wanting to appear difficult or overly assertive.⁷⁷ However, when a number of newcomers enter the group at the same time, these inhibitions are reduced; they find social support from other newcomers and are less likely to conform to in-group pressure.⁷⁸ Initiation becomes more of a group process, but there are dangers from this to the 'old-timers' and the existing in-group for when the newcomers experience a

⁷² Moreland and Levine, 1989, pp 147-148.

⁷³ Levine *et al.*, 2001, p 99.

⁷⁴ See Section 2.5.3.

⁷⁵ Ridgeway, 2001, pp 352-375.

⁷⁶ Moreland and Levine, 1982, pp 104-105.

⁷⁷ Levine *et al.*, 2001, p 96.

⁷⁸ Moreland, 1985, pp 1187-1188.

solidarity among themselves they can coalesce into a subgroup with dynamics somewhat different from the original group.⁷⁹

2.4.1.3 Environmental Factors

Besides the direct interaction between newcomers and 'old-timers', outside factors can also influence the process of socialization. When the environment contains danger of some sort, there is likely to be less accommodation to the newcomers' opinions and their influence is likely to be less pronounced. In contrast, where there is less danger, 'old-timers' become more accommodating and more receptive to change.⁸⁰ The age of the group is also crucial to the possibility of influence from the newcomers during socialization. Relationships between members tend to stabilize over time so that older groups are less susceptible to change than those which are in the early stages of development. Thus newcomers' influence is greater in groups during their early period of development than later when the groups are more stable and complex.⁸¹

2.4.2 *Minority Influence and Social Psychology*

In general, research into group processes has tended to emphasize the pressure to conform to group norms which result in homogeneity within groups. However, history illustrates that minority groups can exert influence and bring about change.⁸² The theoretical processes, by which minorities can influence and change group behaviour, are still disputed. The two principal theories are those of Moscovici and Turner. Moscovici and his colleagues have argued that two separate processes are involved in majority and minority influence; majority influence operates through conformity to norms but minority influence operates by challenging pre-held concepts and, if these challenges are found to be valid in any way, bringing about conversion.⁸³ However, Turner's Self-Categorization Theory postulates a single process by which the minority subgroup only influences the majority if it is itself part of the in-group in some way. If the minority is

⁷⁹ Levine *et al.*, 2001, p 97; Moreland and Levine, 1989, pp 155-156.

⁸⁰ Vaught and Smith, 1980, pp 159-187; van Maanen, 1973, pp 407-418; Levine *et al.*, 2001, p 99; Moreland and Levine, 1989, pp 165-166.

⁸¹ Katz, 1982, pp 101-102.

⁸² In recent times there was the pressure for enfranchisement for women brought about by the suffragette movement and the effective peace movement in America which was instrumental in ending the war in Vietnam.

⁸³ For reviews see Martin and Hewstone, 2001, pp 213-218; Wood *et al.*, 1994, pp 323-345; Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, pp 258-265; Maass and Clark, 1984, pp 428-450.

perceived as part of the in-group, its opinions cannot be vilified in the same way that opposing opinions of out-group members can be vilified. As members of the in-group the opinions of the minority subgroup must be accommodated somehow to become part of the norms of the superordinate group.⁸⁴

Whatever the theoretical processes involved in minority influence, certain behaviour styles have been shown to facilitate change brought about by minorities.

1. The element of consistency is essential in the minority group.⁸⁵ Consistency appears to validate, in some way, the deviant minority opinion in the eyes of the majority, possibly because consistency causes the majority grouping to attribute certainty and competence to the minority opinion.⁸⁶ This element of consistency means that change to the minority stance is not immediate and generally takes place over a prolonged period of time. However, this consistency of stance must also appear flexible and not rigid, for rigidity opposes any tendency of the minority to influence the majority.⁸⁷ Rigidity seems to enable majority group members to categorize the minority as an out-group; the latter, as an out-group, are then expected to hold different, and inferior, opinions to the majority.⁸⁸
2. The perception of the minority as an in-group is also necessary for minority influence to be effective. The awareness of the minority as either an in-group or out-group has been researched and has been shown to have considerable implications. Several workers have demonstrated that a minority group which is perceived as part of the in-group has much greater influence than a minority which is perceived as an out-group.⁸⁹ David and Turner have attempted to explain this phenomenon in terms of Self-Categorization Theory. Any minority which is perceived as very different from the majority on a number of criteria (i.e. perceived as an out-group) has little effect on the majority. However, a minority which differs on only a single issue from the majority (i.e. is seen as

⁸⁴ For reviews see Martin and Hewstone, 2001, pp 224-228, David and Turner, 1996, pp 179-184.

⁸⁵ Wood *et al.*, 1994, pp 324-325; Maass and Clark, 1984, pp 429-430; Levine (1989, pp 205-212), while agreeing with the need for consistency, argues that the impact of consistency is a complex process.

⁸⁶ Maass and Clark, 1984, p 429.

⁸⁷ Maass and Clark, 1984, pp 430-431.

⁸⁸ Mugny and Papastamou, 1982, p 382.

⁸⁹ Mugny and Papastamou, 1982, pp 379-394; Maass *et al.*, 1982, pp 89-104; Martin, 1988, pp 39-52; David and Turner, 1996, pp 179-199.

part of the in-group in all but a single issue) can influence substantially majority opinion.⁹⁰ The majority's group perspective is of the minority as 'part of us' rather than 'them', and as holding the basic values (norms) which the majority similarly holds. Thus any deviation by the minority from the common norms of the group has to be considered carefully by the other members and, if validated, incorporated into the norms of the whole group. Deviation from the norms held by the majority cannot simply be dismissed as inferior in the same way that those of an acknowledged out-group can be dismissed.

3. The number of members of the minority grouping also seems to be influential. Whereas a deviant opinion from an in-group member will be regarded as idiosyncratic and cranky, as more minority members begin to hold the same view the majority are forced into considering the possibility of change; larger numbers convey a greater impact.⁹¹
4. The confidence in the minority opinion is also influenced by context. Confidence is greater when the contact between minority and majority is face-to-face or such that deviant opinions could be costly (i.e. by being ridiculed or ostracized).⁹² The fact that the minority is likely to incur injury of some sort, or is prepared to suffer for their opinions, stimulates the majority to attribute self-sacrifice to their position and this, in turn, results in confidence in the rightness of their position. The willingness of the majority to be influenced by the minority is also related to the source of the minority viewpoint. Thus, the majority will react more positively to the influence of those within a minority whom they regard as valuable and worthy of emulation than towards those whom they do value less positively.⁹³
5. There is considerable evidence that the existing attitudes of the majority group also play a part. If the norms of the group as a whole are tending to shift in the direction of those advocated by the minority (what Paicheler calls *Zeitgeist*), then the influence of the minority will be greater than if the movement within the

⁹⁰ David and Turner, 1996, pp 179-199.

⁹¹ Wood *et al.*, 1994, pp 325-326; Maass *et al.*, 1982, p 99; Maass and Clark, 1984, pp 439-440; Nemeth *et al.*, 1977, pp 15-27.

⁹² Wood, 2000, p 561; McLeod *et al.*, 1997, 706-718.

⁹³ Wood, 2000, p 561; Wood *et al.*, 1996, pp 1181-1193.

group is against the minority opinion.⁹⁴ The disposition of the group is also important; where the normative context of the group favours originality and creativity then minority influence is greater than in groups disposed to traditional values.⁹⁵

In summary, a minority is likely to be effective in changing the norms and opinions of the majority when they present a consistent viewpoint over a period of time. They will exert more influence if they are already perceived as being a part of the in-group by being like the majority in most of the basic norms of the group. Their influence will increase as the number of members of the minority subgroup increases, and if the minority includes some members who are regarded as valuable to the group this will also promote minority influence. Finally, the attitude of the majority itself must also be moving slowly towards the more extreme position of the minority expressed by the minority or, at least, be disposed to accept original and creative movement.

2.5 Leadership of Groups: The Evidence of Social Psychology

Almost all groups, even the most classless ones, exhibit some form of unequal distribution of power and influence; some people lead and others follow.⁹⁶ In most groups there develops a group structure in which different individuals take on specific roles and these roles differ with respect to status and prestige.⁹⁷ In addition, in all groups except those in which leadership is maintained by coercion or threat, leaders exert their power and influence through the consent of their followers. The discussion of leadership, therefore, has to involve both an analysis of the leader and an analysis of the followers.

In the Moreland and Levine model of group development described above (see pp 48ff),⁹⁸ it is during the maintenance phase of group development that the member's role within the group starts to be redefined. The emergence of leaders reflects the opposing requirements of the individual members and the group. The group attempts to attribute a special role to the member which maximizes his contribution to the group while the member seeks to maximally satisfy his needs and requirements from the group.

⁹⁴ Maass and Clark, 1984, pp 431-432; Maass *et al.*, 1982, pp 89-104; Paicheler, 1976, pp 405-427.

⁹⁵ Maass and Clark, 1984, p 432; Moscovici and Lage, 1978, pp 349-365.

⁹⁶ Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, p 309.

⁹⁷ Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, pp 298-300.

⁹⁸ Moreland and Levine, 1982, pp 137-192.

Taking on a role within a group usually involves extra commitment to the group, generally in terms of work, time and even money. Generally the individual member would resist this move but there is a reward – the group confers on the member the honour and prestige which accompanies the role. Thus both the group and individual member benefit from role allocation and, to the extent that the requirements and needs of both are met, role allocation is successful.⁹⁹ The most important and prestigious role within the group is that of leader.

2.5.1 Historical Perspective

Initial research on leadership concentrated on the leader. The first understanding of leadership was related to the leader's personality. Great leaders were deemed to have special or distinctive personality traits which set them apart for leadership.¹⁰⁰ However, while not eliminating personality traits from the equation completely, recent research has failed to demonstrate a close correlation between personality and leadership.¹⁰¹ In contrast to the personality of the leader, situational perspectives lay emphasis on the demands for leadership in particular situations – different situations call for different leadership traits.¹⁰² Given a particular situation, it is not just anyone who makes an effective leader. Overall effective leadership tends to be a synthesis of both leader personality and situation perspectives. This is known as the Contingency Theory and has been developed by Fiedler and his colleagues.¹⁰³ It would tend to correspond to the charismatic leader of Weber's analysis discussed in the previous chapter (see p 11).

The problem with both the personality and the situational perspectives is that neither takes any account of the interaction between leader and followers.

⁹⁹ Moreland and Levine, 1982, pp 167-170.

¹⁰⁰ For reviews see Hogg, 2001b, pp 184-185; Hogg and van Knippenberg, 2003, pp 1-6; Hains *et al.*, 1997, pp 1087-1088; Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, pp 310-311; Hogg *et al.*, 2003, p 19.

¹⁰¹ For example Stogdill, 1974.

¹⁰² Hogg and Vaughan (2002, pp 311-312) cite the example of Winston Churchill who was a successful war leader but was rejected at the first election in peacetime.

¹⁰³ Fiedler, 1965. See also reviews by Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, p 312, Hogg, 2001b, p 185, Hogg *et al.*, 2003, p 19. This point is also made by Holmberg (1978, p 143) who acknowledges that the leader's 'charisma must fit into a specific historical situation and fill a specific need, which is another way of saying his message must be relevant'.

Without followers there can be no leader. The role of the leader is conferred on an individual by members of the group.¹⁰⁴

Leader-Member Exchange (LME) Theory attempts to rectify this omission.¹⁰⁵ LME theory concentrates on the quality of the relationship between the leader and a particular follower. A low quality relationship, which simply adheres to the formal contract between the two and where the follower may feel disadvantaged or disfavoured, is likely to produce less effective leadership than high quality relationships where the leader supports the follower giving greater autonomy and responsibility as appropriate.¹⁰⁶ Although LME takes some account of both leader and follower, there are criticisms of the theory. Hogg *et al.* have noted that the theory is deficient in at least two ways.¹⁰⁷ Firstly, most of the research is concentrated at the dyadic level which takes no account of the fact that the leader/follower relationship takes place within the context of a group. Thus it is affected by the relationship that other followers have to the leader and the relationships that followers have among themselves. Secondly, for LME, followers evaluate their relationship with the leader in absolute terms, whereas, in reality, it is likely that followers evaluate the leader both in personal terms but also in terms of the leader's relationship both with other members and with the group or subgroup as a whole. In terms of the present study, too, LME primarily deals with established leadership and not the emergence of leadership and it concentrates on the relationship between two individuals whereas the Mediterranean personality of the first century is supposed to be essentially group-orientated.¹⁰⁸

The increasing interest in attribution processes has influenced thought on leadership within groups with a move away from Contingency Theory to focus more on what factors cause followers to attribute leadership characteristics to leaders. Lord and his coworkers have proposed the Leader Categorization Theory.¹⁰⁹ This theory hypothesizes that followers have general schemata or preconceptions of what a good leader should be and do. When someone's behaviour evokes some aspects of these

¹⁰⁴ Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, p 319.

¹⁰⁵ For review see Hogg *et al.*, 2003, pp 18-33; Hogg and van Knippenberg, 2003, p 4.

¹⁰⁶ Hogg and van Knippenberg, 2003, p 4.

¹⁰⁷ Hogg *et al.*, 2003, pp 21-22.

¹⁰⁸ Malina, 1993, p 51; Esler, 1994, pp 29-30.

¹⁰⁹ For reviews see Hogg, 2001b, p 185; Hogg and van Knippenberg, 2003, p 3; Lord and Hall, 2003, pp 48-64; Lords *et al.*, 2001, pp 283-310.

schemata in the minds of followers, those followers convert that person into a leader. Thus, when the member is identified as a leader by particular behaviour, the whole leadership schema comes into play and creates further assumptions about his/her behaviour which is appropriate to leadership. The followers have expectations of the behaviour of a leader beyond those already observed and can attribute the whole leadership schema to the emerging leader whether or not the member actually possesses such characteristics. The leader, in turn, strives to fulfill these expectations. When the leader generally fits these schemata, he/she is rated highly in terms of leadership and *vice versa*.

2.5.2 Social Identity Theory of Leadership

The success of Turner's Social Identity Theory in describing and accounting for group behaviour has led to greater application of this sociological perspective to leadership within groups.¹¹⁰ Hogg has described how social identity processes might influence leadership within groups.¹¹¹ He argues that there are three processes which apply to emergent leaders in situations where group identity is salient. These are prototypicality, social attraction and attribution processing. Within the group it is those people who are most prototypical of the group that best embody the norms and behaviour to which other, less prototypical members, aspire to conform. Thus the prototypical member exerts influence over those members who are less prototypical – they aspire to be like him. The prototypical member also identifies strongly with the group; he shows greater in-group favoritism and loyalty but also greater out-group bias, both of which increase his social attraction to other in-group members. The prototypical member is demonstrably 'one of us'. This social attractiveness makes it easier for the prototypical member to gain compliance with his suggestions and recommendations; after all, his suggestions are likely to be those which are typical of the norms of the group as a whole. Further, this ability to influence other members and to gain compliance with recommendations encourages other group members to begin to attribute leadership to the prototypical

¹¹⁰ Briefly Social Identity Theory and its associated Self-Categorization Theory postulate that identity is governed not only by personal identity but also from the identity of groups to which people belong. This group identity is bound up with the norms of the group. People belong to groups as a way of improving self-esteem. Group members conform to group norms as a way of achieving acceptance by the group and of avoiding anxiety over correct behaviour. In order to promote self-esteem the norms and features of the in-group are favoured while those of the comparable out-group are denigrated. Thus the prototypical members of the in-group are viewed as the ideal whereas the stereotype of out-group members is the antithesis of the ideal. A more detailed discussion is given later in this chapter (2.6).

¹¹¹ Hogg, 2001b, pp 184-200.

member; the leadership schema starts to operate. Once the prototypical member begins to be viewed as a leader there is a tendency within the group to attribute additional leadership qualities and charismata to that person.¹¹² In general, the Social Identity model of leadership has been confirmed experimentally.¹¹³ However, the theory cannot be the sole explanation for emergent leadership, for, if prototypicality were the sole criterion of leadership, there would be many leaders. By definition the prototypical position contains many members. However, other factors have been shown to be important, not least the perceived cultural status of the emerging leader. Therefore, if attribution of leadership schemata coincides with cultural indications of leadership in that person (e.g. high social, occupational or educational status) the process of attribution is accentuated.

Hogg argues that there is a ‘prototypicality gradient’ within any group with some members being more prototypical than others.¹¹⁴ Further, Hogg and Knippenberg have demonstrated how the prototype of a group is in flux when social context is in flux and can change depending on the out-group to which the in-group compares itself.¹¹⁵ Using a measure of contrast (Metacontrast Ratio¹¹⁶) for seven individuals within the in-group, they calculate a distribution for the prototypicality of each member of the group against two opposing out-groups. The figures below, adapted from Hogg and Knippenberg, illustrate how the most prototypical member of the in-group changes from C to E when the salient comparison for the in-group shifts from right to left.

¹¹² This attribution is similar to that described by Lords in his Leader Categorization Theory described above.

¹¹³ See Hogg and van Knippenberg, 2003, pp 14-33.

¹¹⁴ Hogg, 2001c, pp 197-212.

¹¹⁵ Hogg and van Knippenberg, 2003, pp 8-9.

¹¹⁶ ‘The ratio is the relationship between the specific position of the member and the out-group position relative to the specific position of the member and the position of every other member of the in-group (Hogg and van Knippenberg, 2003, p 8) so it compares the difference for the specific member from the out-group (as a positive factor) but also takes into account the difference of the specific member from the mean position of the rest of the in-group (as a negative factor).

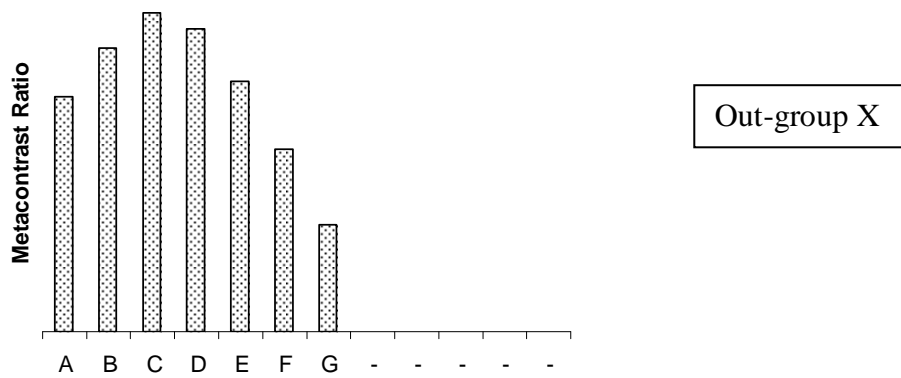


Figure 2.1 In-group members (A-G) are compared to an out-group situated to their right (X).

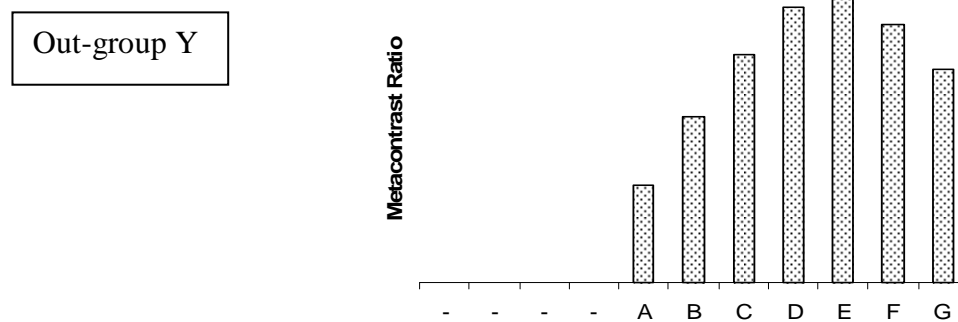


Figure 2.2 In-group members are compared to an out-group situated to the left (Y).

2.5.3 Cultural Status and Leadership

Ridgeway has argued that, besides the prototypes and schemata of leadership, there are additional socially shared schemata that strongly influence the emergence of leaders and the exercise of authority.¹¹⁷ These schemata do not involve group identity but are social categories which carry some sort of status value in society as a whole and can be associated with such factors as occupation, education, ethnicity, age, family and sex. The widely held perception of these status characteristics affect how people behave in groups. Those perceived to have status characteristics are treated with deference and respect by

¹¹⁷ Ridgeway, 2003, pp 65-78; Ridgeway, 2001, pp 352-375; Berger *et al.*, 1998, pp 381-382.

those who perceive themselves to be lacking in these status characteristics. The status-advantaged assume a type of behaviour which expects deference and respect.¹¹⁸

They [status characteristics] shape who speaks up with confidence, who gets noticed and listened to, whose ideas “sound better,” and who becomes influential in the group. The result is that multiple small groups of interacting people across diverse contexts within the society develop local status structures that, in the main, are remarkably consistent with one another. Similar categories of people are relatively privileged ... or unprivileged in these structures.¹¹⁹

One explanation of these observations is Expectation States Theory.¹²⁰ This postulates that status is derived from two sources – *specific* status characteristics and *diffuse* status characteristics. *Specific* status characteristics relate directly to the functioning of the group and the task or goal at hand. *Diffuse* status characteristics are derived from the wider society and are not directly related to group function. Because status characteristics are culturally constructed, diffuse characteristics vary with culture – different societies and historical periods having different priorities of status characteristics.¹²¹ The most effective diffuse characteristics within a culture are those shared across diverse subgroups.¹²²

Leadership can emerge in groups when some members are perceived as having status characteristics. There appear to be two mechanisms at work.¹²³ Firstly, followers attribute competence and expertise to such people and so conclude that these people will benefit the group in leadership roles. Someone who is regarded as influential and competent in diffuse areas is attributed the same competence and influence within the specific group situation.¹²⁴ Secondly, there seem to be implied schemata of leadership which predetermine that members with high status characteristics fulfill the role of leader (i.e. possess the characteristics which coincide with the implied schema of leadership)

¹¹⁸ Ridgeway, 2003, pp 65-66.

¹¹⁹ Ridgeway, 2001, pp 352-353.

¹²⁰ Ridgeway, 2001, pp 356-366.

¹²¹ Ridgeway, 2001, p 358.

¹²² In this way it might be predicted that honour was a key status characteristic in the Mediterranean world, particularly as portrayed in the head of household.

¹²³ Ridgeway, 2003, pp 66-69.

¹²⁴ This is what Berger *et al.* (1972, pp 241-255) calls the ‘burden of proof’; there is an implicit assumption that the status characteristics carry weight unless proved otherwise. Information of status characteristics is sufficient to trigger the deferential response; no evidence is required (Ridgeway, 2003, p 71).

while others with low status characteristics fulfill the role of followers (i.e. accept that they do not possess the characteristics which coincide with the implied schema of leadership and so become followers).¹²⁵ Thus status beliefs not only identify those regarded as competent but also direct the relationship of follower to leader.

There are some important differences between these status characteristics and typical in-group prototypes such that, within a real group, the two operate separately, but possibly interactively, in affecting emerging leadership. Status beliefs do not apply specifically to the in-group. They are operative across all groups within a culture. Status characteristics contain elements accepted by both in-groups and out-groups and are, therefore, somewhat more complex than simple in-group prototypes. There can be differences in status characteristics within in-groups and subgroups but the evaluation of status characteristics operates across groups – the characteristics can be the same in both in-groups and out-group. There is some consensus about who are worthy of respect and deference even across what would normally be regarded as opposing groups. In this way there is less competition for status characteristics – the acceptance of status characteristics across groups automatically legitimizes the authority and influence of people possessing high status characteristics.¹²⁶

‘Because of the status belief, people expect leadership from status-advantaged actors, and expect that others, who presumably share the belief, also expect such leadership. The presumption that others also expect such leadership makes it seem normative in the situation so that when it occurs, people treat it as ‘right’ by acting deferentially towards it.’¹²⁷

Much of the research into status characteristics has been performed within the discipline of sociology, but similar work has been carried out in the field of social psychology. There has been considerable interest in the workings of juries. Strodbeck and his coworkers, using specifically assembled mock juries, found that the position of jury foreman almost always was conferred on people of high occupational status (doctors, teachers rather than mechanics).¹²⁸ This recognition of status effects is

¹²⁵ Ridgeway, 2003, pp 66-67; Conway *et al.*, 1996, pp 25-38.

¹²⁶ Ridgeway, 2003, pp 68-69.

¹²⁷ Ridgeway, 2003, p 76.

¹²⁸ Strodbeck *et al.*, 1957, pp 713-718.

comparable to Bourdieu's argument for cultural and symbolic capital which advantages those who possess it.¹²⁹ Status-advantaged parents initially provide children with cultural capital so that their attitudes and knowledge make the educational and social environment a comfortable, familiar place in which they can succeed easily. In contrast, those less advantaged find these environments alien and hostile. Thus there is inequality, beginning in childhood, between those who have, or have not, an advantageous beginning in life. The cultural capital becomes embodied (cultural habitus) within the person, their attitudes, character, speech and ways of thinking, and leads, inevitably, to an uneven distribution of power in society for the habitus of the status-disadvantaged conditions them to accept the system's legitimacy.¹³⁰

One important aspect of cultural capital is the ability and confidence to speak in groups. The readiness to speak reflects a right to speak which, in turn, is related to a competence in speech.

The authorized speech of status-generated competence, a powerful speech which helps to create what it says, is answered by the silence of an equally status-linked incompetence, which is experienced as technical incapacity.¹³¹

By means of language, therefore, cultural capital can be demonstrated within groups. The status-advantaged member is more likely to speak in the group and more likely to be the first to speak. Early studies in social psychology demonstrated that inequalities quickly develop within groups as a result of language and that these can become stable within the first hour of a session. In groups of members with homogeneous status, the most talkative member of a group can occupy 40% of the 'total speech acts'.¹³² He/she is the person most often addressed by others and is rated by others as having the best ideas and contributing most to the guidance of the group. In exerting the most influence this talkative member becomes, in effect, the emerging leader of the group.¹³³ Subsequent studies demonstrated that the same idea expressed by a talkative group member was rated

¹²⁹ Bourdieu, 1988.

¹³⁰ Jenkins, 1992, pp 103-124.

¹³¹ Bourdieu, *Distinction* quoted in Jenkins, 1992, p 147.

¹³² Ridgeway, 2001, p 353.

¹³³ Bales, 1970, pp 200-208.

more valuable by the group than when the same idea was expressed by a less talkative member.¹³⁴

Finally Hornsey *et al.* have performed some interesting studies on the perceived legitimacy of the power held by leaders. They showed that, where leaders of subgroups exercise power over the superordinate group, that leadership was accepted by the superordinate group as a whole only to the extent that the leadership was viewed as legitimate.¹³⁵ Where the power of the leader was deemed illegitimate there was a perceived increase of bias for one particular subgroup at the expense of the other groups. Further there was the expectation by all subgroups that illegitimate power would be abused, the subgroup from which the illegitimate leader arose was expected to profit from his power at the expense of the other subgroups.¹³⁶

2.5.4 Summary of the Social Scientific View of Emerging Leadership

The factors contributing to the emergence of leaders within a group are many and various. Contingency Theory proposes that a combination of charismatic personality and appropriate situation is required.¹³⁷ However, the emergence of charismatic leaders is infrequent and seems to reflect the extraordinary, rather than the routine. In more ordinary situations, where group-belonging is salient, the normal process appears to be the selection of leaders who reflect the norms of the groups – who are prototypical of the group. However, many members will occupy this central prototypical position. One factor which seems important in determining which prototypical members emerge as leaders is the possession of status characteristics. These status-advantaged members are endowed with the expectation of competence and influence by status-disadvantaged members. Status characteristics also instinctively and intuitively determine the leader and follower roles within a group. The status characteristics of a status-advantaged member can be demonstrated in the willingness and ability to talk. This influences less talkative members and causes them to attribute competence to the talkative members.

¹³⁴ Riecken, 1958, pp 309-321; Ridgeway, 2001, pp 353-354.

¹³⁵ Hornsey *et al.*, 2003.

¹³⁶ Hornsey *et al.*, 2003, pp 224-226.

¹³⁷ Fiedler, 1965.

2.5.5 Leadership in the Graeco-Roman World

In looking at leadership in the Graeco-Roman world I now return to the groups identified as possible models for the early church communities earlier in this chapter (see pp 44ff).

2.5.5.1 Leadership of the Household

The leader of the household, the *paterfamilias*, exercised authority over all, and all were defined in relation to him. The *paterfamilias* both owned property and had legal control of the people (slaves, family both minor and adult and also, to a lesser extent, freedmen who remained contracted to the *paterfamilias*) but, by the time of the first century CE, there may have been a lessening of this influence compared with earlier.¹³⁸ The influence of the *paterfamilias* extended over the religion of the household. The household was the focus for the household cult and all members of the household took part in the rituals but it was the *paterfamilias* who was responsible for the correct observance.¹³⁹ In terms of leadership, the *paterfamilias* demonstrates the importance of cultural status. He occupies a prominent position both within the household and in the wider community. His ownership of the house and the people within it make attribution of leadership schemata to him likely. His family and slaves will expect to obey him. He is not a prototypical member of the household but he, himself, determines the ethos of the household. Leadership within the household would appear to be primarily determined by his cultural status with members attributing leadership schemata to the *paterfamilias* as well as he, himself, expecting such attribution.

2.5.5.2 Leadership in the Voluntary Associations

As well as providing a social environment, voluntary associations enabled those individuals, who were not among the elite of society, to occupy positions of honour, privilege and prestige. The voluntary associations structured themselves on civic principles and members could occupy and fulfil official positions, rejoicing in the titles of *magister*, *curator*, *pater collegii*, *quinquennalis*, etc.¹⁴⁰ There were privileges attached to official leadership positions; officials often benefited from larger portions of food at banquets than the ordinary members, and ordinary members who insulted the

¹³⁸ Clarke, 2000, pp 86-90, 101.

¹³⁹ Clarke, 2000, pp 95-101; Barclay, 1997, pp 67-72.

¹⁴⁰ Clarke, 2000, p 68; Kloppenborg, 1996, p 26; Lendon, 1997, p 97.

quinquennalis at dinner were fined twice the amount charged for insulting a fellow member.¹⁴¹ The *quinquennalis* at Lanuvium also had the honour of officiating at religious rites, conducting the worship clothed in white.¹⁴²

Voluntary associations were often dependent on patronage from wealthier people. Such patrons could provide finance which subsidized celebrations – Lucius Caesennius Rufus donated the interest on 15,000 sesterces to a burial club in Lanuvium.¹⁴³ The wealthier members of the association might subsidize the expenses of the association, in exchange for honour in the form of statues and honorific decrees.¹⁴⁴ House-based associations often met in a room inside the house of their patron.¹⁴⁵ The patron of such associations benefited not only from the honours conferred but also because he knew that his slaves and freedmen were not then joining outside associations over which he had no control.¹⁴⁶ Sometimes the patron would take little part in the functions of the group; in other cases the patron could be a leader of the group (in ways similar to the *paterfamilias* of the household).¹⁴⁷ The Agrippinilla inscription of a Dionysiac guild relates to a family-based association which had a membership of over 400 suggesting that the membership extended beyond the household.¹⁴⁸ Within this guild, official positions were often granted to members closely related to the family of the patron.¹⁴⁹ As in the household, high social status was a strong determining factor of leadership. Patrons, and those who occupied office, spent time, energy, resources and money in the common cause and received in return public honour, appreciation, and prestige.¹⁵⁰ The similarity of this reward for input in the voluntary association accords well with the conclusions of Moreland and Levine as they analysed the negotiation of group roles during the maintenance phase of group development discussed above.¹⁵¹

¹⁴¹ Lendon, 1997, p 98.

¹⁴² *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* 14.2112 (second century CE).

¹⁴³ Clarke, 2000, pp 65-66.

¹⁴⁴ Lendon, 1997, pp 97-98.

¹⁴⁵ Such as the inscription *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* 6.9148 referring to a collegium meeting in the house of Sergia Paullina in Rome (second century CE).

¹⁴⁶ Kloppenborg, 1996, p 23.

¹⁴⁷ Wilson, 1996, p 11.

¹⁴⁸ Clarke, 2000, p 157.

¹⁴⁹ Clarke, 2000, pp 64-65.

¹⁵⁰ Popkes, 2005, pp 331-332.

¹⁵¹ Moreland and Levine, 1982, pp 167-170.

However, as described previously (see p 51), there were other functionaries within the Voluntary Associations and, in some associations these were elected by a vote of the membership, as in the Iobacchi club in Attica.¹⁵² Less honorific positions could be held by members of lower social status and even leadership positions were available within those groups whose patron was not directly involved in the day-to-day activities of the association. There is little information on the occupants of these roles within the group but, as they could be elected by ballot, it is likely that the membership elected those most likely to comply with and further the aims of the association – those who were prototypical of the group.

2.5.5.3 Leadership of the Jewish Synagogues

The Jewish synagogue, itself, had much in common with a voluntary association.¹⁵³ Adapting to their situation as a minority in a Hellenistic culture, the Diaspora synagogues replaced the priesthood with lay leadership.¹⁵⁴ Inscriptional data list a number of titles of the synagogue officials including ἀρχισυνάγωγος, ἄρχων, γερουσιάρχος, προστάτης, πατήρ/μητήρ συναγωγῆς – although the inscriptions give little information as to the roles played by the occupants of these titles in everyday life.¹⁵⁵ The ἀρχισυνάγωγος is the most common title but, in gospel sources, can be used interchangeably with ἄρχων.¹⁵⁶ Early research suggested that ἀρχισυνάγωγος, the leader of the synagogue, was responsible for worship and the day-to-day running of the synagogue. More recently this has been questioned as more work has been done on epigraphic sources. Rajak and Noy, concentrating exclusively on epigraphic data, claim that ἀρχισυνάγωγος was a more honorific title afforded to patrons and benefactors, similar to the status distinction given by civic inscriptions in Graeco-Roman society.¹⁵⁷ Harland claims that the synagogues may have sought benefactors from the local elite and, by honouring them with titles and monuments, used their patronage as a way into the wider civic life of the community.¹⁵⁸ Regularly ἀρχισυνάγωγος was conferred on benefactors who had personally endowed the community from their own finances and

¹⁵² Tod, 1932, p 85.

¹⁵³ Richardson, 1996, pp 90-109 cf. pp 102-103.

¹⁵⁴ Kraabel, 1992a, p 26.

¹⁵⁵ Clarke, 2000, pp 126-127; Campbell, 1994, pp 49-54.

¹⁵⁶ As Jairus who is an ἀρχισυνάγωγος (*Mk.* 5.2) but ἄρχων in *Mt.* 9.18.

¹⁵⁷ Rajak, 2001, pp 410-419.

¹⁵⁸ Harland, 2003, pp 224-228.

can be associated with the building or renovation of a synagogue. If such benefaction was expected of the ἀρχισυνάγωγος then the position was likely to be limited to those possessing wealth and education.¹⁵⁹ Similarly, the ἄρχων may have been an honorific title – there are some inscriptions associated with children and others are associated with πάσης τιμῆς – but others, even those given for life, carry public duties.¹⁶⁰ Sometimes the ἀρχισυνάγωγος title could be granted for life,¹⁶¹ or retained within the same family,¹⁶² and even women could be granted the title.¹⁶³ Levine questions the attribution of ἀρχισυνάγωγος solely to benefactors; based on both epigraphic and literary sources he sees the title as encompassing a multitude of functions including patronage and worship-leading but also having some political connotations.¹⁶⁴

The γερουσιάρχης was the leader of the γερουσία, or council of elders, who seemed to be responsible for secular concerns such as maintaining the community building and finances.¹⁶⁵ They seemed to be occupied by older men.¹⁶⁶ The titles, προστάτης and πατήρ/μητήρ συναγωγῆς occur in inscriptions but their functions are obscure. Προστάτης may be comparable to the ἀρχισυνάγωγος, and πατήρ/μητήρ συναγωγῆς appear to be honorific.¹⁶⁷

At least, in some cases, the ἀρχισυνάγωγος appears to be a patron/benefactor and it seems reasonable to identify this leadership with the cultural status of the person. According to Campbell, the elders, too, were older men who had a high standing within the Jewish community. Elders would both encompass the status of public respect and also be seen as upholding the ideals of the Jewish community (i.e. as prototypical of the group).

¹⁵⁹ Clarke, 2000, pp 129-130; Campbell, 1994, p 49.

¹⁶⁰ Clarke, 2000, pp 131-132.

¹⁶¹ *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum* 744 from Teos (probably second or third century CE).

¹⁶² *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum* 1404 from Theodotus (probably first century CE).

¹⁶³ *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum* 741 from Smyrna (probably second century CE).

¹⁶⁴ Levine, 1998, p 201.

¹⁶⁵ Clarke, 2000, p 133; Campbell, 1994, pp 51-52.

¹⁶⁶ Feldman, 1993, p 59.

¹⁶⁷ Clarke, 2000, pp 133-134.

2.5.5.4 The Philosophical Societies

The leadership here is the ‘Great Man’ form of leadership already mentioned above (see p 48) – the charismatic leader of Weber’s analysis.¹⁶⁸ There is little evidence of leadership other than that of the great man and his successor, although some differentiation on the basis of the disciples’ advancement in learning was made.¹⁶⁹ Indeed the general ethos of the school would prohibit any form of aggrandisement. The schools’ purpose was to teach right living and right behaviour. Although the prescriptions for these might differ, generally philosophy helped to engender the social values of devoutness towards the gods, and justice and right behaviour towards humanity.¹⁷⁰ Seneca summarises philosophical teaching thus:

We talk much about despising money ... that mankind may believe true riches to exist in the mind and not in one’s bank account, and that the man who adapts himself to his slender means and makes himself wealthy on a little sum, is the truly rich man. (*Epistles* 108.11)

Thus, ideally, wealth itself was unimportant. What was important was:

utter simplicity of life; tranquillity of mind in all circumstances; disdain for common values, opinions, and sensual delights; disregard for social conventions and status, demonstrated in bold speech before one’s social betters; and, especially, fearlessness in the face of death.¹⁷¹

The aristocracy generally mistrusted philosophy because it could lead to withdrawal from civic life. It could be tolerated among the young as idealism. The exception was Stoicism which did not lead to withdrawal (as in the case of Seneca).¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ See Chapter 1, p 9.

¹⁶⁹ Meeks, 1983, p 83.

¹⁷⁰ Mason, 1996, p 33.

¹⁷¹ Mason, 1996, p 35.

¹⁷² Mason, 1996, pp 36-37.

2.5.5.5 Assessment of the Models of Leadership from the Graeco-Roman World

With the exception of the philosophical schools, the models of leadership from the Graeco-Roman world have much in common. All seem to subscribe to the honour and status values of the wider society. Those capable of patronage gave generously and were rewarded with deference and concrete examples of respect in the form of honorific titles, statues and epigraphic inscriptions. Patronage often took the form of providing places for the groups to assemble and these patrons may then exert leadership over the group. Members who came from traditionally reputable families might expect to acquire positions of leadership – those families who had influence in secular society might also expect to exert influence in religious circles. The *paterfamilias*, voluntary associations and Diaspora synagogues all conform, to a large extent, to sociology's 'status characterization theory' discussed above (see p 68). The status characteristics of those who exerted influence and leadership were defined by the culture of the wider society. Wealth *per se* might not always have been relevant but family background, heritage, education, occupation,¹⁷³ prestige and honour in terms of civic responsibilities and status (slave, freeman, citizen) were all determinants of who would assume roles of leadership and who would not. Cultural status seems to be a major determinant of leadership.

2.5.5.6 Leadership in the Early Church Community

Like the values of most of the philosophical schools, the standards of the early church communities were counter-cultural if the evidence of the gospels reflects the teaching of the historical Jesus. The normal status values were to be reversed. The disciples must not be like the Pharisees who love the places of honour.

They [the scribes and Pharisees] love to have the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have people call them rabbi. But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students. And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father—the one in heaven. Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah. The greatest among you will be your servant. All who exalt

¹⁷³ A hierarchy of occupations can be detected in the order of listing of the various occupations following the names of Jews and God-fearers in the Aphrodisias inscription (section 3.3.3 p 123).

themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted. (*Mt.* 23.6-12)

Nobody is to regard themselves as greater than another.

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, ‘Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’ He called a child, whom he put among them, and said, ‘Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.’ (*Mt.* 18.1-4 also 20.21-23)

The traditional status symbols of place at table or respectful greetings are abolished and the whole system of honour and shame is reversed.

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. (*Phil.* 2.3-4)

But these values were the ideal not the reality. The fact that they were not always, or even often, adhered to is demonstrated by Paul’s regular admonitions. Frequently Paul has to remind the believers that normal standards did not apply. In Corinth, Paul objected to the boasting about leaders which was causing factions within the community (*1 Cor.* 3.21-22). He played down the gift of tongues which some people were rating highly in themselves by stressing other gifts such as prophecy (*1 Cor.* 14.2-5). In Galatia, Paul reversed the trend for some people to regard themselves as better than others by enjoining on the believers to ‘bear one another’s burdens’ and for all to test their own work not that of their neighbour (*Gal.* 6.2-4). In Philippi Paul implores Euodia and Syntyche to be reconciled (*Phil.* 4.2-3). Examples such as these provide significant hints that the ideal, counter-cultural values of the early church were not always followed.

There is also ample evidence that householders and others of moderate to high status within the wider community were highly respected within the Pauline churches. There are examples of groups which met in the home of believers. In conformity with the *paterfamilias* being responsible for the household cult, there seems to have been conversion of complete households (Cornelius and his household - *Acts* 11.14; Lydia and her household - 16.15; the jailer and his household – *Acts* 16.31 and 34; Crispus and his

household - *Acts* 18.18; Stephanas and his household - *1 Cor.* 1.16 and 16.15), although some slaves and women may have converted apart from their households (cf. *Phm.* 1.10; *1 Cor.* 7.12). Leaders of households appear to be people of influence within the early church communities, housing the meetings of the community (*Acts* 2.46; *Rom.* 16.5; *1 Cor.* 16.19; *Col.* 4.15; *Phm.* 1.2). Thus Stephanas is recommended to the believers of Corinth (*1 Cor.* 16.16).¹⁷⁴ Prisca and Aquila, who accompanied Paul on some of his missions (*Acts* 18.18), are described as fellow-workers (συνεργοί) and had a church which met in their house (*1 Cor.* 16.19). Philemon refreshed the heart of the saints (*Phm.* 1.7) and is a partner to Paul (κοινωνός – *Phm.* 1.17). Burke sees Paul taking on the role of the *paterfamilias* to the Thessalonians in considering this community as his household. He exercises the twin attributes of authority and hierarchy over them; he has the right to expect obedience from them (*1 Thess.* 2.7) and he instructs and sets an example for them (*1 Thess.* 4.1-2).¹⁷⁵

The evidence, therefore, is that relatively higher social status was a factor in determining leadership. Such people had social capital and were culturally predetermined for leadership, and lower status individuals attributed leadership schemata to them. However, the prestige associated with other charismatic gifts such as prophecy, glossolalia and the interpretation of glossolalia also appears to have been important. These gifts were associated with possession of the Spirit which was an important aim of the group. Thus those exhibiting these gifts were prototypical of the group and their leadership exhibits the characteristics of Social Identity theory of leadership (see p 66).

2.6 Group Identity and Inter-Group Bias

There seems to be a need within people to belong to groups and, when individuals belong to a group, they derive part of their identity from membership of that group. This is their 'social identity'. There are a number of theories to account for the desire for group belonging.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ Chester (2003, p 242) claims 'Paul seems to be extending [to Stephanas] the sort of recognition a wealthy patron might receive within an association'.

¹⁷⁵ Burke, 2003, pp 135-142.

¹⁷⁶ Hewstone *et al.*, 2002, pp 580-584.

1. The Social Identity Theory – members of a group seek high self-esteem and membership of an in-group serves to provide a positive social identity.¹⁷⁷ Social Identity Theory seems to be the predominant hypothesis in this area.
2. The Optimal Distinctiveness Theory – people have a need both for assimilation and differentiation; membership of groups fulfils this need in assimilating members into the in-group but differentiating them from members of out-groups.¹⁷⁸
3. Subjective Uncertainty Reduction Theory – membership of groups gives clear norms of behaviour for its members so reducing the subjective uncertainty of how to behave in different situations.¹⁷⁹
4. Terror Management Theory – people adopt a ‘cultural worldview’¹⁸⁰ to provide stability in the face of their own mortality. In-group members share the same cultural worldview and so are supportive of each other. Out-group members are viewed as holding a different cultural worldview and, for this reason, are seen as threatening.¹⁸¹

These theories attempt to account for behaviour within groups. Members of a group categorize themselves in terms of the norms and expectations of their group. Group norms dictate the types of behaviour which are acceptable to the group.¹⁸² Having such norms removes anxiety from the individual who, otherwise, has to determine appropriate behaviour individually. This is one of the attractions of group membership, for people need certainty that their behaviour is correct and appropriate in particular situations and the group norms provide a frame of reference for such behaviour.¹⁸³ In addition, to the extent that members conform to the norms of the group, they are accepted within the group for there is a social attraction which enhances the attractiveness of a group member who is prototypical of the group.¹⁸⁴ But any tendency to act against the expected norms

¹⁷⁷ Tajfel and Turner, 2001.

¹⁷⁸ Brewer, 2001.

¹⁷⁹ Hogg, 2000.

¹⁸⁰ Hewstone *et al.*, 2002 p 582.

¹⁸¹ Solomon *et al.*, 1991.

¹⁸² Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, p 296.

¹⁸³ Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, pp 246-247; Sherif, 2001, 64-70.

¹⁸⁴ Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, pp 287-288; Hogg, 2001a, pp 63-66; Marques *et al.*, 2001, p 402.

is viewed as deviancy by fellow group members.¹⁸⁵ Thus there are strong social pressures to adopt the norms of the group to which they belong (the in-group) for this brings acceptance. In-group members have a vested interest in portraying the group to which they belong in the best possible light for this reinforces their own self-esteem. This leads to ethnocentricity by which in-group members evaluate the norms of the in-group preferentially relative to other comparable groups.¹⁸⁶ Thus, in-group members do not only define themselves according to the norms of the in-group but also derive their identity from not belonging to other groups (the out-groups). This is particularly true in circumstances of scarcity and competition, where the distribution of available resources is perceived as unfair.¹⁸⁷ Thus membership of the in-group is also defined over and against non-membership of comparable out-groups.¹⁸⁸ As a way of strengthening the identity of the in-group, the norms and characteristics of out-groups are sometimes vilified, particularly when the in-group feels threatened by an out-group.¹⁸⁹ Such vilification leads to stereotyping of out-group members which, in turn, leads to prejudice.¹⁹⁰ Negative characteristics are attributed to out-group members to enhance the feelings of superiority of members of the in-group. Thus out-group members may be characterised as lazy and vice-ridden as opposed to the goodness and morality of in-group members. Such negative stereotyping can also lead to the out-group being used as scapegoats to account for the misfortunes of the in-group.¹⁹¹ Adverse situations as related to the out-group are attributed to these internal 'vices', while adverse situations for the in-group tend to be attributed to external factors.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁵ Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, p 255, 288; Hogg, 2001a, pp 63-68; Marques, 2001, pp 403-419.

¹⁸⁶ Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, pp 98-99.

¹⁸⁷ Tajfel and Turner, 2001, pp 94-109.

¹⁸⁸ Hewstone *et al.*, 2002, pp 578-580; Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, pp 100-101.

¹⁸⁹ Hewstone *et al.*, 2002, p 580; Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, pp 371-376.

¹⁹⁰ Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, pp 101, 372-373.

¹⁹¹ German attitudes to Jews prior to and during the Second World War would be a recent example of such scapegoating attributing the decline in German economy to 'miserly Jews' (Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, p 101).

¹⁹² Hewstone *et al.*, 2002, pp 578-581; Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, pp 98-99.

2.6.1 Examples of Inter-group Bias in the Ancient Mediterranean World

There is evidence that inter-group bias/hostility was present in the ancient world. Groups of Jews and Gentiles seem to show traits of this type of in-group/out-group relationship as also do believing and non-believing Gentiles and believing Gentiles and believing Jews.

The negative opinion/prejudice of the Gentile world to ῥουδαῖοι is evident from some of the literature of the time. Isaac has completed a very detailed analysis of prejudice and stereotyping in classical antiquity.¹⁹³ In particular he categorizes the stereotypes under a number of headings: antisocial behaviour, Jewish religion, food restrictions, Jewish Sabbath and circumcision.¹⁹⁴ In the social sphere, Tacitus records how Jews

regard the rest of mankind with all the hatred of enemies. They sit apart at meals, they sleep apart, and though, as a nation, they are singularly prone to lust, they abstain from intercourse with foreign women; among themselves nothing is unlawful. (*Histories* 5.5.2)

In the third century CE, Philostratus similarly describes the Jews as

inveterate rebels, not against Rome only but against all human society. Living in their peculiar exclusiveness, and having neither their food, nor their libations, nor their sacrifices in common with men. (*Life of Apollonius*, V.33)

The dietary restrictions were an element in the antisocial charges aimed at Jews but their avoidance of pig meat was also mocked. Petronius satirically suggested that Jews worshipped pigs (*Fragment* 37),¹⁹⁵ and Plutarch also asked whether the avoidance of pig meat was from reverence or aversion (*Table-Talk* 4.5.1). The observance of the Sabbath rest was regarded as idleness and stereotyped the Jews as lazy. Tacitus reckoned that the Sabbath rest was so attractive to idle Jews that they introduced a seventh year of idleness too.

¹⁹³ Isaac, 2004.

¹⁹⁴ Isaac, 2004, pp 440-491.

¹⁹⁵ Schäfer believes that this idea of a 'pig-god' is unique (1997, p 78).

We are told that the rest of the seventh day was adopted, because this day brought with it a termination of their toils; after a while the charm of indolence beguiled them into giving up the seventh year also to inaction. (*Histories* 5.4)

Circumcision also marked the Jews as different. Tacitus suggested that Jews were circumcised specifically to be different from others (*Histories* 5.5).

Examples of scapegoating are also apparent. In the Jew/Gentile context, Josephus attributes the pogrom at Antioch to false accusations that the Jews were attempting to burn the city (*Jewish War* 7.46-53). In the Christian/Gentile context, Tacitus records the cruelty of Nero in blaming, and then persecuting, Christians as a means of allaying rumours that he, himself, was responsible for the fires in Rome (*Annals* 15.44). There was an increase in anti-Jewish activity around the first centuries BCE and CE and Stanley attributes the outbreak of pogroms to groups 'competing for scarce social, economic and territorial resources'.¹⁹⁶ Stanley attributes the competition for resources to a variety of causes: 1) whereas the Greek populations in the cities had levelled out the Jewish population continued to increase through immigration and a higher birth rate thus threatening the Greek majority, 2) the Roman civil wars of the time put additional economic strain on the cities of Asia Minor but Jewish resources continued to be drained away to Jerusalem in the form of Temple taxes, 3) resentment of Roman rule and authority by the Greeks found its outlet, not against the Romans personally, but against the weaker Jewish contingency who were perceived as enjoying special religious privileges from their Roman benefactors.

Similarly the Jewish attitudes to Gentiles were less than favourable as can be seen both in some Jewish and New Testament extracts. The Torah-observant author of *Jubilees* advocates complete separation from the Gentiles as a group because of their evil deeds.

Separate yourself from the Gentiles,
And do not eat with them,
And do not perform deeds like theirs.
And do not become associates of theirs,
Because their deeds are defiled. (*Jubilees* 22.16)

¹⁹⁶ Stanley, 1996, p 115.

Similarly the *Fourth Book of Ezra* assumes all other than Jews will be condemned for

they devised for themselves vain thoughts,
and proposed to themselves wicked frauds;
they even declared that the Most High does not exist.
And they ignored his ways! (7.23-24)

In the New Testament literature, Paul regards non-believing Gentiles as vice-ridden, being fornicators and driven by lust.

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from fornication: that each one of you know how to control your own body in holiness and honor, not with lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God. (*1 Thess.* 4.3-5)

Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers -- none of these will inherit the kingdom of God. And this is what some of you used to be. (*1 Cor.* 6.9-11)

The Gentiles are classed as sinners.

We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners (*Gal.* 2.15)

The gospels, too, reveal the Gentiles as a class apart and the very opposite of the believers who are to regard Gentiles as the out-group along with tax-collectors.

If the member refuses to listen to them ... let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. (*Mt.* 18.17)

Partiality for his own in-group is very evident in Paul's writings. The attribution of virtues to those living by the Spirit (the in-group) in contrast to the vices of those not led by the Spirit (the out-group) is clearly delineated in Paul's *Letter to the Galatians*.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (*Gal.* 5.22-23)

whereas those who are not lead by the Spirit perform works of the flesh

fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these'. (*Gal. 5.19-21*).

Similarly those idolaters who have not worshipped the true God are denigrated as

filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness, they are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, rebellious toward parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. (*Rom. 1.28-31*)

Esler, in his sociological analysis of Paul's *Letter to the Romans*, argues that

Like other ethnic groups then and since, Paul and the other Judeans of his time were ethnocentric, that is, they were strongly socialized to consider that they were superior to the other ethnic groups who surrounded them.¹⁹⁷

Thus there seems ample evidence that the inter-group biases and prejudices, described in modern social psychology, were present in the ancient Mediterranean people and that they would be major factors in any attempt to unite into one community believing Gentiles and Law-observant Jewish believers – each coming, as they did, from very different ethnic/cultural affiliations.

2.6.2 Processes for Improving Inter-group Relationships

Social psychologists have identified several processes which facilitate a reduction in inter-group bias. Although under experimental conditions these have been studied in isolation, in the real world many or all these strategies operate simultaneously.¹⁹⁸ The strategies entail both interpersonal and inter-group processes. With the dyadic personality of the ancient Mediterranean people, it might be presumed that the inter-group processes would be more effective in their situation.

¹⁹⁷ Esler, 2003, p 145.

¹⁹⁸ Hewstone *et al.*, 2002, p 593; Brewer and Gaertner, 2001, pp 462-466.

2.6.2.1 Decategorization

The process of decategorization aims to reduce the bias towards out-group members by removing them from the context of the out-group. The process is a formalization of the assumed benefits of the Contact Theory. By personal contact with individuals of the out-group, in-group members begin to differentiate the person from the stereotype of the out-group. Contact with out-group members, which results in pleasant experiences, challenges the preconceived perceptions of the out-group by the in-group. It causes a reappraisal of the out-group by the in-group. The in-group generates affective ties with out-group members and gradually learns about the out-group so attenuating their prejudices and forcing the recognition that the out-group is not a homogeneous unit but is composed of different individuals.¹⁹⁹ The Contact Theory can be extended. Thus, even knowing that an in-group member has befriended a member of an out-group can potentially reduce prejudice and bias.²⁰⁰ In contrast, contact with out-group members, which results in unpleasant experiences, reinforces preconceived perceptions of the out-group and can accentuate prejudices.²⁰¹ Because decategorization relies on the transformation from group categorization into personal identification, it might be thought to be less relevant or successful in the context of the first century Mediterranean world where identity was predominantly orientated towards group identity.²⁰²

Titus in Jerusalem

It is likely that the contact with Gentile believers was common-place in the Antiochene church. It may be assumed that, by the time of the Jerusalem Conference, the Gentile and Jewish believers in the church at Antioch had experienced sufficient contact to eliminate much of the initial bias and prejudice of these opposing groups. However, if at this time, Gentile believers were present only in early church communities of the Diaspora and not at Jerusalem, the same may not be true of Jewish believers in the Jerusalem community. Thus it may be significant that Paul, in going to Jerusalem with Barnabas, decided to take along Titus too (*Gal.* 2.1). Titus was an uncircumcised Greek (*Gal.* 2.3). In terms of Contact Theory, this looks like an attempt by Paul to decategorize Gentiles as a group

¹⁹⁹ Hewstone *et al.*, 2002, pp 589-590; Brewer and Gaertner, 2001, pp 457-458; Pettigrew, 1998, pp 70-73.

²⁰⁰ Wright *et al.*, 1997, pp 73-90.

²⁰¹ Hewstone *et al.*, 2002, pp 589-590; Brewer and Gaertner, 2001, pp 457-458; Pettigrew, 1998, p 67.

²⁰² Malina, 1993, p 51; Esler, 1994, pp 29-30.

and to change the preconceived stereotype of the Gentile believer held by the Jerusalem community. In this way he would hope to reduce the bias against such believers and so facilitate a favourable outcome in his attempts to have Gentile believers accepted as uncircumcised Gentiles. No doubt Titus was chosen as an ideal example of such Gentile believers who would create a favourable impression within the Jerusalem church.²⁰³ Thus the presence of Titus may well have represented an attempt on Paul's part to promote contact between the Jerusalem community and a leading member of the believing Gentiles at Antioch in the hope of reducing inter-group bias and prejudice.

2.6.2.2 Recategorization

In contrast to decategorization, recategorization does not attempt to reduce group categorization but rather to establish a higher level of group categorization which is inclusive of the in-group and out-group.²⁰⁴ The origins of the recategorization theory derive from observations/experimentations by Sherif.²⁰⁵ Sherif showed that, in situations where there was inter-group conflict, the provision of superordinate goals, to which the warring factions could all contribute, significantly reduced the conflict. These studies have been confirmed by a number of workers in the field.²⁰⁶ The provision of superordinate goals appears to operate by providing another social identity beyond the normal group identity. This recategorizes both the members of the in-group and out-group as members of a super group, thus giving them all a common in-group identity.²⁰⁷ In these studies the one-group categorization was found to reduce 'bias primarily by increasing the attractiveness of former out-group members'.²⁰⁸ Co-operation within the one, super group transformed members' representations of the memberships 'from "Us" and "Them" to a more inclusive "We"'.²⁰⁹ It is generally acknowledged that recategorization operates alongside Contact Theory but enhances it.²¹⁰

²⁰³ Watson, 2007, p 103.

²⁰⁴ Brewer and Gartner, 2001, 459-461; Hewstone *et al.*, 2002, p 590.

²⁰⁵ Sherif, 2001, pp 64-70.

²⁰⁶ See Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, pp 427-428.

²⁰⁷ Gaertner and Mann, 1989, pp 239-249; Gaertner *et al.*, 2001, pp 356-369.

²⁰⁸ Gaertner and Mann, 1989, p 239.

²⁰⁹ Brewer and Gaertner, 2001, p 459.

²¹⁰ Brewer and Gaertner, 2001, pp 466-467.

Examples in the Pauline Literature

Recategorization seems to be a familiar ploy in much of Paul's writings. There are many occasions in which he attempts to remove or downgrade previous group identity by replacing it with the new, more inclusive, identity. Thus, in the *Letter to the Romans*, he replaces the distinction between Jew and Greek by the new identity which is the all encompassing Lordship of Christ.

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. (*Rom.* 10.12).

In the *Letter to the Galatians*, Paul uses the ritual of baptism into Christ Jesus to unite Jew and Greek, slave and freeman, man and woman, extending that idea of belonging to include descent from Abraham, which was previously an identity marker of Jews only.

As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise. (*Gal.* 3.27-29)²¹¹

A similar new identity conferred by baptism is argued in the *Letter to the Colossians* and, in this case, the validity of a variety of previous in-group identities is negated.

Seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all! (*Col.* 3.9-11)

In *1 Corinthians*, it is the gift of the Spirit, which accompanies baptism, which is the common identity of all members. This Spirit unites all the members into one body so that all together form the one body of Christ.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all

²¹¹ Paul devotes a considerable portion of the *Letter to the Galatians* to arguing that this descent from Abraham is applicable to all believers in Christ Jesus (*Gal.* 4.22-31).

baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. (*1 Cor.* 12.11-14)

Thus Paul seems to use the ploy of creating a superordinate group to give a new identity to his Gentile converts and to unite them to, and reduce conflict with, the existing group of Jewish believers. In addition, as was observed previously, Paul contrasts this new superordinate group favourably with out-groups such as non-believing Gentiles (as in *1 Thess.* 4.3-5; *Gal.* 5.19-23; *1 Cor.* 6.9-11; *Rom.* 1.28-31).

Romans

Esler has done substantial work to reveal this approach in the Pauline literature, particularly *Romans*. He has identified Paul's strategies to create superordinate identities which could reduce inter-group, or subgroup, bias that was apparent between some Jews and Greeks in Rome. In his *Conflict and Identity in Romans*, Esler perceptively highlights the variety of tactics Paul uses to unite both Jewish and Gentile believers within a single identity. Only a brief summary of some of the salient points can be given here but, hopefully, this will illustrate how appropriate the use of recategorization was to the early communities of believers. In the opening chapters of the letter, Paul attempts to remove any feelings of superiority of Jewish believers over Gentile believers because of their observance of the Mosaic Law by recategorizing both Gentiles and Jews under the all-encompassing identity of sinners (*Rom.* 3.9).²¹² Following the same tack, Paul then seeks to redefine righteousness not as a prerogative of the Jews but as the benefit of those who believe in and belong to Christ Jesus (*Rom.* 3.21-24).²¹³ As in the *Letter to the Galatians*, Paul, in *Romans*, redefines the ancestry from Abraham such that it depends not on the flesh but on the promise (*Gal.* 4.22-26). Thus it is those who believe in the promise who are heirs of Abraham. Abraham becomes the prototype of all believers, not exclusively of Jews, for his righteousness preceded his circumcision (*Rom.* 4.10).²¹⁴ Yet Paul does not wish to undermine totally the cultural identity of the Jewish believers.

²¹² Esler, 2003, pp 142-154. 'What then? Are we any better off?'¹ No, not at all; for we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin' (*Rom.* 3.9).

²¹³ Esler, 2003, pp 155-170. 'But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the Law and the prophets, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (*Rom.* 3.21-24).

²¹⁴ Esler, 2003, pp 171-194.

Descent from Abraham and righteousness are still identity markers of Jews but the move which Paul makes is to claim that they are identity markers which the new Gentile believers now share through their faith. Paul reaffirms the importance of Israel; it is the olive tree of Israel to which the wild olive of the Gentiles is grafted (*Rom.* 11.17). Thus the ethnicity of the Jews is still relevant but only as a subgroup of the more important common identity of believers in Christ Jesus.²¹⁵ Paul then puts forward the positive aspects of common group identity. He specifies the norms of the superordinate group (*Rom.* 12.6-21; 15.5-9)²¹⁶ which apply equally to Jewish and Gentile believers. Thus, for Esler, the *Letter to the Romans*

represents an elaborate and profound attempt to re-present the identity of the Christ-movement in a manner dominated by the recognition of ethnic differences. It is a communication in which the theological truth of the oneness of the God who righteouses all without distinction constitutes the foundation for the common identity advocated by Paul.²¹⁷

2.6.2.3 Dual Identity

As Esler recognized in his analysis, forming a superordinate group in which Jews lost their own identity was likely to cause problems.²¹⁸ Modern social psychologists have recognized this pitfall associated with recategorization. Prolonged co-operation between (sub)groups can result in a blurring of boundaries and loss of identity within subgroups. Although this seems desirable as a way of reducing inter-group conflict/bias, over time the members of the subgroup tend to resent their loss of identity and take steps to reassert it leading to increased conflict.²¹⁹ Forcing individuals to focus only on the new superordinate identity threatens subgroup identity and subgroup members can become aggressive in attempting to restore the original group boundaries.²²⁰ The threat is greater if the loss of group identity is also apparently associated with loss of status; then the perceived threat can result in enhanced subgroup solidarity and a strengthening of group

²¹⁵ Esler, 2003, pp 298-305.

²¹⁶ Esler, 2003, pp 308-338.

²¹⁷ Esler, 2003, p 365.

²¹⁸ Esler, 2003, p 364.

²¹⁹ Brewer and Gaertner, 2001, pp 460-461; Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, pp 428-429; Hewstone *et al.*, 2002, p 591; Hornsey and Hogg, 2002, pp 204-205.

²²⁰ Hornsey and Hogg, 2000b, p 254.

boundaries, which ‘produces a more focused and polarized in-group prototype that renders the subgroup more orthodox with a more hierarchical leadership and power structure’.²²¹ Brewer postulates an ‘optimal distinctiveness theory’ by which there are two opposing motives involved in group membership – the need for inclusion and the need for differentiation.²²² Members seek to belong to groups in which the boundaries between the in-group and similar out-groups are clearly drawn.²²³ This supplies the required need for inclusion but not necessarily the need for distinctiveness for, if superordinate groups are too inclusive, or too large, they fail to provide for the member’s need for distinctiveness.

To overcome these difficulties of lost identity, a more complex model has been proposed in which the superordinate group is introduced while maintaining the original in-group and out-group categorization.²²⁴ A number of studies have shown that this dual identity produces less inter-group conflict than does membership of a superordinate group alone.²²⁵

Yet there are a number of difficulties associated with dual identity and a delicate balance has to be maintained. The perception of power and influence is a highly sensitive area. If a previous out-group exerts excessive influence within the superordinate group, it may be perceived by former in-group members as taking over the superordinate group and assimilating them into a previously perceived out-group.²²⁶ Similarly the leadership of the superordinate groups and the individual subgroups is also a sensitive area. Unbalanced representation of leadership from any subgroup may be perceived as influencing decision-making in favour of one particular subgroup and thus being unfair. Under-represented subgroup members can feel threatened, and this, in turn, encourages identification with the subgroup rather than the superordinate group so increasing inter-group bias and prejudice.²²⁷ In contrast, the leadership of the subgroups needs to be prototypical of that group so that, if the superordinate group identity comes to be perceived as threatening, the subgroup leadership can ‘champion subgroup identity

²²¹ Hornsey and Hogg, 2000a, p 145; Hewstone *et al.*, 1986, p 24.

²²² Brewer, 2001.

²²³ Brewer and Gaertner, 2001, p 460.

²²⁴ Gaertner and Dovidio, 2000, pp 155-183.

²²⁵ Hornsey and Hogg, 2000b, pp 242-255; 2000a, pp 143-157.

²²⁶ Hornsey and Hogg, 2000a, pp 149-150.

²²⁷ Hornsey and Hogg, 2000a, pp 150-151.

vigorously'.²²⁸ Where subgroups of the superordinate group are of unequal status other problems can occur. The majority and minority subgroups may have different preferences for the organization of the group. Dominant majority groups will tend to favour total assimilation of the minority group into the superordinate group, whereas the minority subgroups will prefer a more pluralistic integration with greater retention of the characteristics of each subgroup.²²⁹ Thus the minority subgroup will generally be more content with a dual identity than will be the dominant majority group.²³⁰

The Examples of the Hellenists

Before the Jerusalem Conference, there is an episode related in *Acts* which suggests that the early church was prepared to adopt a dual identity model of community membership. In chapter 6 of *Acts*, Luke relates the story of the dispute between the Hebrews and Hellenists (*Acts* 6.1-6). In general, Luke attempts to portray harmonious relationships in the early church communities. For this reason it would appear that the Hebrew/Hellenist dispute is not his own invention but is derived from a historical tradition.²³¹ Further evidence of a pre-Lukan tradition comes from the detailed list of names of the seven (*Acts* 6.5), many of whom are not mentioned in the subsequent narrative,²³² and that this is the only time that Luke mentions 'the twelve'.²³³ Luke portrays the dispute as being over the neglect of the Hellenist widows (*Acts* 6.1).

However, most commentators agree that the conflict was probably related to the deeper issue of the different language and culture of the two groups.²³⁴ Thus it seems that two culturally distinct groups existed within the Jerusalem community of

²²⁸ Hornsey and Hogg, 2000a, p 151.

²²⁹ Hornsey and Hogg, 2002, pp 203-218.

²³⁰ Hewstone *et al.*, 2002, p 592.

²³¹ Hengel, 1979, p 71; Lüdemann (1989a, pp 77-78) argues that the dispute may not have been over the welfare of widows but that Luke had historical information concerning a dispute 'between the two parties in Jerusalem in the early period of the primitive community.' (p 78); Conzelmann (1987, p 44) similarly argues that the dispute over the widows has been 'artificially reconstructed' by Luke to cover over some more serious dispute within the early community.

²³² Lüdemann, 1989a, pp 78-79 who also argues that there was a dispute between the two groups but not necessarily over the widows.

²³³ Haenchen, 1971, p 262.

²³⁴ Dunn, 1996, pp 80-85; Barrett, 2004, I, pp 308-309; Haenchen, 1971, pp 265-269 (who also argued that there were theological differences); Slee, 2003, pp 14-16 (who argues that the dispute concerned table fellowship between Torah-observant Jewish believers and less observant Hellenists); Lüdemann, 1989a, pp 36-38; Wedderburn, 2004, pp 44-47 (who argues that the widows were passed over because the Hellenists attended separate community gatherings at which charity distribution did not occur; Dunn (1996, pp 83-84) and Sim (1998, p 66) also conjecture that the Hebrews and Hellenists met in separate house churches).

believers.²³⁵ The situation was resolved by calling on ‘the twelve’, so it would appear that the Hellenists were, in some way, accountable to the leaders of the Hebrew faction. The Hellenists’ situation conforms to the feelings of threatened identity described by Hornsey and Hogg in subgroups which lack representation in leadership and decision-making.²³⁶ Such feelings reinforce the subgroup identity and lead to conflict with opposing subgroups. The decision of ‘the twelve’ was to preside over an election and appoint ‘the seven’ to perform the necessary service (*Acts* 6.3). The seven men appointed all appear to have Greek names and can be presumed to be derived from the Hellenist group.²³⁷ It seems reasonable to assume, therefore, that ‘the twelve’ acceded to the protests of the Hellenists by giving them their own leadership. Some commentators speculate that ‘the seven’ were already leaders of the Hellenists.²³⁸ If this were the case, then ‘the twelve’ were recognizing their leadership officially.²³⁹

Seland performs an interesting sociological analysis of the Hebrews/Hellenists dispute. In these terms, the conflict is a matter of honour and shame and, given the embeddedness of the individual in his/her group, the insult would be perceived as against the whole group. The apostles dealt with the conflict by ‘conservative change’.²⁴⁰ They addressed the cause of the discontent by giving the Hellenists their own leadership.²⁴¹ In this way they seem to have placated the Hellenists without incurring any dissatisfaction from the Hebrew contingent.²⁴² The strategy of the leadership of the early church, therefore, when faced with conflict, seems to have been to encourage the maintenance of dual identity, preserving subgroup identity alongside the new identity of belief in Christ Jesus – conservative change.

²³⁵ Dunn puts the situation succinctly: ‘the suggestion of a church already marked by two distinct groups is strong’ (1996, p 84).

²³⁶ Hornsey and Hogg, 2000a, pp 150-151.

²³⁷ Seland, 1998, p 181; Wedderburn, 2004, p 46; Lüdemann, 1989a, pp 77-78; Dunn, 1996, pp 83-84; Barrett, 2004, I, p 314.

²³⁸ Dunn speculates that ‘the seven’ were leaders of Hellenist house churches (1996, pp 83-84); Wedderburn, 2004, p 46; Klauck, 2000, p 13; Hill, 1991, p 26.

²³⁹ Hill, 1991, p 26 ‘Luke’s description in 6.3 does not debase them [the seven] but presupposes their recognition and authority’.

²⁴⁰ Seland, 1998, p 183.

²⁴¹ It is apparent from the subsequent narratives of Stephen (*Acts* 6.8-8.3) and Philip (*Acts* 8.5-40) that they were not simply to ‘wait on table’ (*Acts* 6.2) but were evangelists comparable to the apostles.

²⁴² Sederberg, 1989, p 88: ‘Conservative change, however, presumes the regime controls sufficient resources to (1) distribute to the dissatisfied, while maintaining the support of most of the establishment and (2) control those who remain or become disgruntled.’

Some commentators dispute the historicity of the whole Hebrew/Hellenist saga.²⁴³ While some of the details, such as the list of names, make this unlikely, it is possible that Luke exaggerates the ease with which the dispute is resolved. Yet even if the reconciliation is exaggerated, there still seems to have co-existed two distinct subgroups within the Jerusalem church, both adhering to faith in Christ Jesus but differing in their language, culture and leadership. Some dispute arose, possibly reflecting frustration with the status of the Hellenists, and the reconciliation seems to have involved accepting the Hellenists' position and recognizing their separate identity.

Jews in a Diaspora World

There is considerable evidence that Jews living in a Graeco-Roman environment took steps to preserve their Jewish identity. Three broad categories define the Jews in the Diaspora, which Barclay has classed low, medium and high assimilation.²⁴⁴ Of particular interest are those who fall into the 'moderate' category and who seemed to favour a ploy of maintaining a dual identity.²⁴⁵ Many seemed to do this by attempting limited assimilation into the Hellenistic culture but preserving the distinctive boundary markers which set them apart as Diaspora Jews.²⁴⁶ As Philo reports Roman citizens, who were also Jewish, were entitled to collect the monthly dole of corn-handout a day late when the distribution was timed for the Sabbath (*On the Embassy to Gaius* 158), 'documenting their dual identity as Jews and Romans'.²⁴⁷ The right of the Jews to observe the Sabbath was also recognised in their exemption from military service (*Jewish Antiquities* 14.226).²⁴⁸ The collection of Temple tax was another concession gained by the Jews from Roman authorities.²⁴⁹ Whilst the general population was expected to pay tribute to the Roman gods, Jews were exempt

²⁴³ Watson, 1986, pp 26-28, although in the revised edition he says 'it may be that Luke here conceals a significant theological disagreement' (2007, p 66).

²⁴⁴ Barclay, 1996a, pp 103-123, 320-334. Also Zetterholm (2003, p 60) uses much the same classes (traditionalistic, innovative, secular tendencies).

²⁴⁵ Many of the examples, which Barclay (1996a) gives under his 'Medium Assimilation', seem to illustrate the dual identity model.

²⁴⁶ Tellbe (2001, p 41) argues 'the Jews reacted when their status was threatened or when crucial identity markers were violated. It seems thus not to have been the right of citizenship *per se* that was the most vital matter for Jews, but gaining and retaining the rights and privileges that enabled them to live according to Jewish Law and traditions in Graeco-Roman society.'

²⁴⁷ Barclay, 1996a, p 293.

²⁴⁸ Tellbe, 2001, p 44.

²⁴⁹ Tellbe, 2001, pp 44-45.

from such sacrifice.²⁵⁰ However, they were allowed to collect and transport their offerings to the Jerusalem Temple in accordance with their Law. Although there was opposition to the Temple tax, the right of the Jews to send their collection to Jerusalem was generally upheld.²⁵¹ Whilst, from the Roman point of view, these concessions probably represented sound political alliances and strategies for maintaining peaceful co-existence,²⁵² it is of interest that the concessions extracted by the Jews were those which most defined their Jewish identity in the Diaspora.²⁵³

One specific incident illustrates well the Jewish efforts to assimilate into the wider society at the same time as upholding their Jewish identity. Josephus reports an interesting event concerning the use of oil at Antioch. He explains how the Jews, being reluctant to use oil prepared by foreigners (because of the possibility of its having been offered to idols),

receive[d] a fixed sum of money from the gymnasiarchs to pay for their own kind of oil. (*Jewish Antiquities* 12.120)

Barclay argues that the oil was probably associated with training in the gymnasium as this was the only institution in which oil was supplied free to clients.²⁵⁴ If so, this implies that some Antiochene Jews were attempting to assimilate into Hellenistic culture by attending gymnasia (possibly on the way to citizenship) but, at the same time, maintained their Jewish identity by insisting on the externals of Torah observance – monotheism being a principal identifier of Judaism. As Barclay claims, the oil privilege was a ‘particularly galling symbol of the ‘separateness’ of the Jews’, even at the time when their attendance at gymnasia indicates their attempted assimilation into Greek culture.²⁵⁵

Harland presents evidence that it was not just individual Jews who assimilated with their Diaspora environment; he claims that there is evidence that synagogue

²⁵⁰ Thus Josephus (*Jewish Antiquities* 12.126) records how those Jews claiming citizenship were not obliged to worship the gods which other citizens worshipped; similarly *Against Apion* 2.65.

²⁵¹ As in Miletus (*Jewish Antiquities* 14.244-6) where the Jews’ rights to observe the Sabbath, perform their sacred rites and offer the first fruits were maintained; so also at Ephesus (*Jewish Antiquities* 16. 167-168) where the ‘sacred money’ is to be protected from theft and the Jews are to be allowed to follow their laws and customs and offer their first-fruits taking them to Jerusalem (*Jewish Antiquities* 16. 172-173).

²⁵² Barclay, 1996a, pp 291-295; Tellbe, 2001, pp 62-63.

²⁵³ Tellbe (2001, p 41) argues that the concessions granted to Jews by Roman authorities were those specifically requested by Jews and Harland (2003, pp 220-223) also argues this.

²⁵⁴ Barclay, 1996a, pp 256-257 n 63.

²⁵⁵ Barclay, 1996a, p 256.

communities did likewise.²⁵⁶ In his study of the associations of Roman Asia around the time of the first centuries CE, Harland demonstrated that inscriptions, monuments and dedications were common; he asserts that these were means by which a given group could

stake a claim ... within the civic context, making a statement regarding its place within the networks and hierarchies of polis, empire and cosmos.²⁵⁷

The same appears to be true of the Jewish synagogues of the Diaspora. As evidence Harland cites the decree which the Jews of Asia offered in honour of Augustus (*Jewish Antiquities* 16.165) the wording of which was to be placed on a monument. One or more synagogues had, apparently, followed the custom of associations and passed an honorary decree for the emperor, making sure that they forwarded word of the decree to Augustus himself.²⁵⁸ Harland argues that this public declaration of an honorary decree could be interpreted by those viewing it as a sign that synagogues, as well as associations, participated in the customary civic and imperial practices. Nor was the practice limited to the emperor; there was a second honoree in the emperor's decree – Marcius Censorinus, an imperial official of senatorial rank. No doubt this positive contact with an important official would yield favours and benefactions in the future.²⁵⁹ In Cyrenaica (N. Africa) three inscriptions have been found, one of which appears to be a monument erected by a Jewish 'corporate body' to Marcus Tittius, a Roman provincial official.²⁶⁰ The language used towards the official is honorific but it also demonstrates the community's concern for the wider civic population.²⁶¹ Thus it appears that the Jewish synagogues were very similar to Graeco-Roman associations in working for civic recognition and benefaction.

2.6.2.4 Cross-Cutting Categorization

People do not just belong within superordinate groups. Most individuals belong to a variety of groups which can overlap to varying degrees, or not at all. It is this aspect that can sometimes be utilized to reduce inter-group bias. Reduction of bias appears to occur

²⁵⁶ Harland, 2003, pp 219-228.

²⁵⁷ Harland, 2003, p 219.

²⁵⁸ Harland, 2003, pp 219-220.

²⁵⁹ Harland, 2003, p 224.

²⁶⁰ Dated 24-25 CE.

²⁶¹ Harland, 203, pp 224-227.

because it makes social categorization more multifaceted – some out-groups may contain members who are fellow in-group members in a different group structure. This can decrease the importance of any one group; it enables in-group members to see that out-group members are not a single category so that others are categorized in multi-dimensional terms.²⁶² In practice, cross-cutting categorization seems to work well in situations where a majority subgroup (perceived as out-group) gains a powerful influence over a superordinate group, threatening the identity of the less influential in-group. Where the threatened in-group can also identify with another, separate group to which the dominant out-group does not belong, they experience less threat to their identity as their identity is not solely dependent on membership of the superordinate group.²⁶³

However, there is a danger in cross-cutting categorization. If membership of one group is more important or meaningful either socially or functionally, it can more than outweigh the benefits of crosscutting categorization. The more important grouping becomes dominant for identity, especially where groups feel threatened, and bias can increase rather than decrease.

Jews in the Diaspora

As recorded above (see p 91) the strategy of dual identity for Jews in the Diaspora appears to have functioned well as long as the Jewish half of the identity remained unthreatened. But the Jewish identity was threatened on occasions. The special privileges which the Jews enjoyed from the Roman authorities were the occasion of resentment and irritation for their Gentile neighbours.²⁶⁴ Thus Josephus relates a number of incidents where the Jewish privileges were violated. In Sardis, the Greeks disputed the right of Jews to have their own meeting place and settle their own affairs (*Jewish Antiquities* 14.235). Opposition to the Jewish Temple tax, associated with an implication that more money ought to be donated to the civic funds, caused additional problems (*Jewish Antiquities* 16.45). Finally the refusal of the Jews to participate in the traditional cults resulted in tensions between Jews and their neighbours, for religious and political interests were so intertwined that any refusal to worship the local gods had serious

²⁶² Hewstone *et al.*, 2002, p 592; Hornsey and Hogg, 2000a, pp 150-151; Brewer and Gaertner, 2001, pp 463-464.

²⁶³ Hornsey and Hogg, 2000a, p 151.

²⁶⁴ So Tellbe, 2001, pp 39-43.

implications for the local civic society.²⁶⁵ When their rights were threatened the Jews reacted strongly and protested to the Roman authorities (*Jewish Antiquities* 16.31-40). As Tellbe points out, it seems that it is not their civic rights over which the Jews were most concerned but their ability to live according to their laws and traditions; ‘these privileges were the *conditio sine qua non* for Jewish life in the Diaspora’.²⁶⁶ Where their rights were violated the Jews insisted on the reinstatement of the privileges. When dual identity proved impossible, the Jews of the Diaspora took refuge in their universal Judaism, suffering persecution rather than abandon their Jewishness.²⁶⁷ Under adverse conditions the dual identity broke down and, when choice had to be made, the identity of importance was Judaism. When threatened within the superordinate identity of the Graeco-Roman culture, Diaspora Jews fell back on their original Jewish identity which was not shared by other superordinate group members.

Jews and Jewish Sympathizers in Jerusalem

A possible example of cross-cutting categorization in the ancient Mediterranean world is the position of ‘sympathizers’ to Judaism. In the Diaspora ‘sympathizers’ appear to have been accepted and welcomed as adherents to Diaspora Judaism to various degrees.²⁶⁸ In some way they could consider themselves as members of the superordinate group of ‘Diaspora Judaism’. However, when these ‘sympathizers’ journeyed to Jerusalem on pilgrimage to offer sacrifice in the Temple, they found that they were excluded from the grouping of ‘Torah-observant Judaism’. Their exclusion was apparent physically by the prohibition on their entering the Temple beyond the Court of the Gentiles (*Jewish Antiquities* 3.318-319). In Jerusalem, if not in the Diaspora, the Jewish identity was too important to include Gentiles within the inner courts of the Temple no matter how sympathetic to Judaism they were. The exclusion of Gentiles from the Temple reinforced Jewish identity. Whereas the ‘sympathizers’ may, in some way, be part of Judaism, their adherence to Judaism did not overlap with the Judaism of the circumcised Jew.

²⁶⁵ Josephus illustrates this connection between religious observance and civic responsibility in Alexandria as he quotes Apion, ‘If the Jews (says he) be citizens of Alexandria, why do they not worship the same gods with the Alexandrians?’ (*Against Apion* 2.65).

²⁶⁶ Tellbe, 2001, p 41.

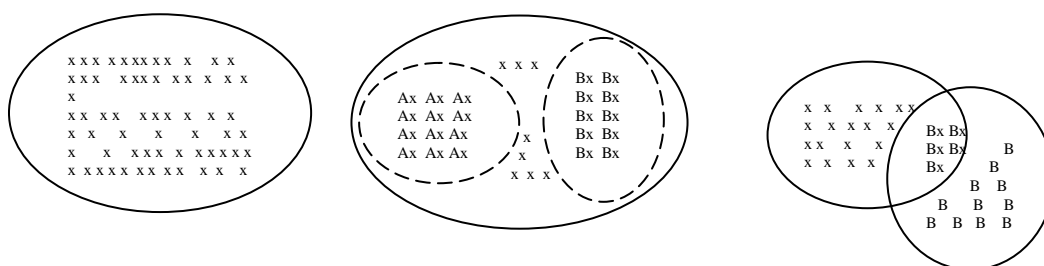
²⁶⁷ Philo (*Against Flaccus* 62-96) reports the outrages suffered by the Jews at Alexandria.

²⁶⁸ The evidence for this is given in Chapter 3 on the Gentiles at Antioch.

2.6.3 Summary of Inter-Group Relationships

Hornsey and Hogg have developed a diagrammatic representation of the various possible inter-relationships among groups, or of subgroups within a superordinate group which might prove helpful in analysing the situation at the Jerusalem Conference.²⁶⁹

Figure 2.3 Diagrammatic representation of inter-relationships among groups.



Model A represents the superordinate group in which members (x) forsake any previous group identity and derive their identity solely from the superordinate group.

Model B represents the superordinate group in which some members undertake a dual identity derived not only from the superordinate group (x) but also from their original subgroup identity (A and B).

Model C represents the cross-cutting boundaries group in which some members derive their identity not only from the superordinate group (x) but also from another group (B) to which they belong and to which other members of the superordinate group do not belong, while others belong to the cross-cutting group (B) but not to the superordinate group.

²⁶⁹ Hornsey and Hogg, 2000a, p 150.

2.6.4 Superordinate Groups and Schism

In the discussions of the use of superordinate identities and dual identities, note was made of the problems which can result when the delicate balance of identity in super- or subgroup is disturbed (see p 91). Similar situations can arise when previous subgroup identities become more salient/dominant. These dangers also occur in cross-cutting categorization. If membership of one group becomes more important or meaningful either socially or functionally, it can more than outweigh the benefits of membership of a superordinate group in a superordinate, dual identity or crosscutting situation. The more important grouping becomes dominant for identity, especially where groups feel threatened, and bias within the superordinate group can increase rather than decrease. In extreme cases members may revert totally to their original identity and forsake the identity of the superordinate group completely, effectively causing schism.

Sani and Reicher, analyzing the dispute over women priests in the Church of England and the schism within the Italian Communist Party, have concluded that disputes which involve a 'change of essence' of the group can be viewed as threatening not only the identity of the group but also its existence.²⁷⁰ If such changes are implemented, the group is deemed no longer to exist by some of its members. Such situations then tend to result in schism as the dissenting members can no longer accept the new identity of the group.

The trigger that may eventually lead some members to join a schism is the perception that the change implies a radical subversion of the group identity, a denial of its 'true', deep essence. A strong and acute sense of identity subversion will generate negative emotions, perceptions of group disunity, and a decreased sense of loyalty and identification with the group.²⁷¹

When dissenting members perceive that advancing their objections is unlikely to bring about a return to the group's original identity, they leave rather than belong to the group which has changed in its essential characteristics.²⁷² Their existence in the superordinate group relied on cohesion around an ideological context and continues so long as that

²⁷⁰ Sani and Reicher, 1998 and 2000; Sani, 2008.

²⁷¹ Sani 2008, p 727.

²⁷² Sani and Reicher, 2000.

ideological context is maintained. But, when some members see this ideology as being denied or contravened, schism becomes a realistic possibility. The situation is exacerbated when the dissident members feel that their objections are not being heard – when they feel voiceless.

The schismatic option, however, will be more or less likely undertaken depending on how much voice those who are dissatisfied perceive to have within the group. Fear of isolation and discrimination will increase the likelihood of joining a schism. On the contrary, a sense of being respected and valued will increase the chances of deciding to stay in the group.²⁷³

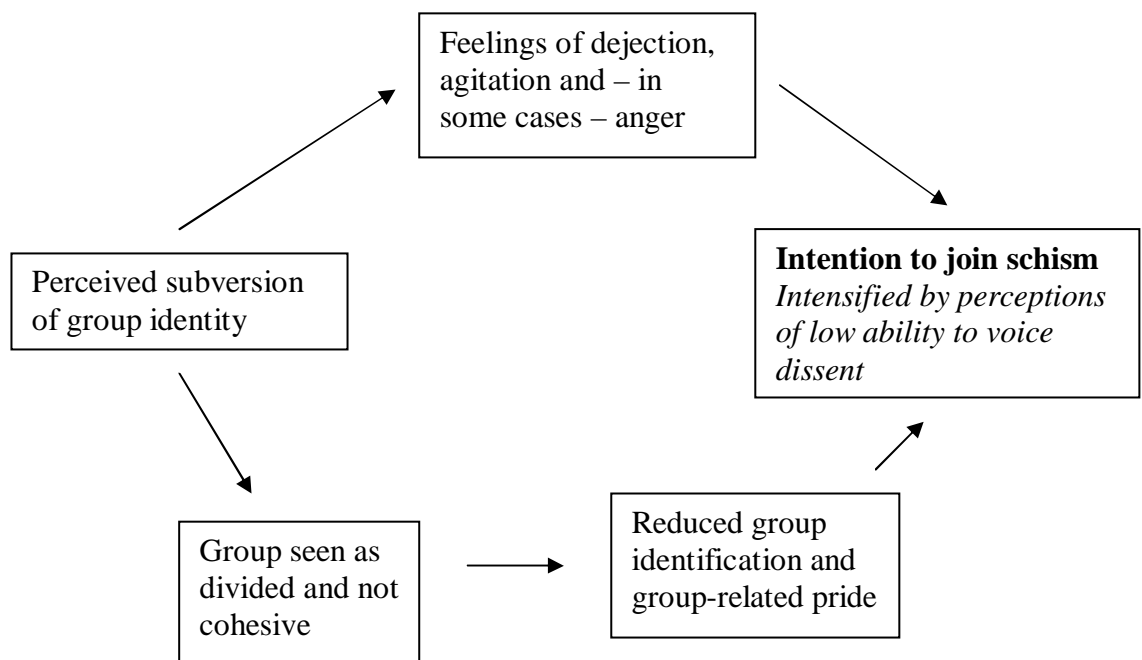


Figure 2.4 (taken from Sani, 2008) A pictorial illustration of the social psychological model of the schismatic process.

When schism does become a realistic possibility, the ‘faultlines’ along which the group will break tend to be the subgroup divisions which exist in the superordinate group.²⁷⁴ In this way, ‘schism and superordinate identities are two sides of the same theoretical

²⁷³ Sani, 2008, p 727.

²⁷⁴ Hart and van Vugt, 2006.

coin'.²⁷⁵ This tendency towards schism is more prevalent in groups constituted on ideological principles than those groups established on the basis of task performance or interpersonal relationships.²⁷⁶

It may be pertinent to mention, at this point, some data by social psychologists working in modern Israel.²⁷⁷ Although modern, there do seem to be parallels with the situation in the Jerusalem church in the first century. In their first study, Bizman and Yinon examined the ability of secular and religious Israeli Jews to handle conflict over the right of the religious sector to influence law-making in the State of Israel. Conflict arises because the religious sector maintain that 'the state should be conducted according to laws dictated by the Jewish religion' whereas the secular sector oppose such moves and claim that 'the state should be guided by the needs of modern society'.²⁷⁸ The findings of the study showed that, when the identity of the secular and religious sectors were defined mainly by the superordinate identity of being Israeli, dual identity was not as effective as would be predicted by the model in aiding problem-solving between the two groups. Bizman and Yinon propose a number of reasons for their findings.

1. 'The demands of the religious Jews are based on their view that secular people are still defined as Jews; therefore, the religious Jews should feel responsible for the behavior of their nonobservant brethren. This sense of responsibility is manifested in religious Jews' attempts to introduce various religious laws into the Israeli legal system.'²⁷⁹ The secular sector do not attempt to impose their way of life on the religious sector and resent the attempts of the religious sector to impose their religious code of behaviour on them. They perceive an asymmetry in the relationship which is unacceptable.
2. The problems presented reflected conflicts 'directly related to typical religious laws. It might be that the religious participants' responses to the conflict

²⁷⁵ Sani and Todman, 2002, p 1653.

²⁷⁶ Sani and Todman, 2002, p 1654.

²⁷⁷ Bizman and Yinon, 2000, pp 589-596; Bizman and Yinon, 2004, pp 115-126.

²⁷⁸ Bizman and Yinon, 2000, p 591.

²⁷⁹ Bizman and Yinon, 2000, pp 594-595.

strategies were dictated primarily by what they thought to be the religious ruling rather than by their personal inclinations.’²⁸⁰

3. Bizman and Yinon suggest that, although the secular sector accepts the superordinate identity, they do not accept the interdependence as it exists. From past experience, ‘the perceived infeasibility of the problem-solving strategy under these circumstances is rooted in the perception that the theological basis underlying the religious people’s behaviour prevents them from making any compromise.’²⁸¹

These studies clearly illustrate the difficulties of compromise when strong religious beliefs and legalities are involved. The problem of reducing inter-group bias is bound up not only with the normal subgroup relations but also with strongly held religious beliefs which have been held for a life time and handed on over generations. Identity and salvation are at stake. Although the studies were performed with present day Israeli people, they seem pertinent to the current thesis and contribute to the understanding of the difficulties facing the early church in its attempts to form a united community of Gentiles and Law-observant Jewish believers. The responsibility for their secular brethren felt by the religious Jews seems very similar to that of the Jewish believers who

came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” (*Acts* 15.1)

The ‘Weak’ and the ‘Strong’ in Rome

Paul describes a potential conflict in Rome which seems to have been caused by the subgroup identity being stronger than that of the superordinate group (*Rom.* 14), assuming that both ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ refer to members of the early church.²⁸² The ‘weak’ are adhering to food restrictions, eating only vegetables, while the ‘strong’ eat anything (*Rom.* 14.2); the ‘weak’ keep some days as special while the ‘strong’ treat all days alike

²⁸⁰ Bizman and Yinon, 2000, p 595.

²⁸¹ Bizman and Yinon, 2004, p 125; also Amir and Ben-Ari, 1989, pp 243-257.

²⁸² Watson (2007, pp 175-177), Barclay (1996b, pp 288-292) and Esler (2003, pp 339-344) take this section to apply to a real situation in the Roman church. Nanos (1996, pp 85-165) believes that the situation describes conflict between believers in Christ and Jewish non-believers and Elliott (1999) argues for a difference based on ascetic practices.

(14.5-6).²⁸³ These appear to be subgroups of a large group containing both ‘weak’ and ‘strong’, for the eating of only vegetables suggests common meals where some prohibited food is also served probably by the ‘strong’.²⁸⁴ The ‘weak’ are clinging to their (subgroup) Jewish identity, as embodied in the Jewish food laws and Sabbath observance, which the ‘strong’ see as denying and opposing their identity as followers of Christ (superordinate group) with its beliefs that the Mosaic Law is not binding.²⁸⁵ The result is that the ‘strong’ are judging the ‘weak’ and there are quarrels and disputes between the subgroups (*Rom.* 14.1) which Esler claims seems ‘more like schism than consensus’.²⁸⁶ Paul employs the interesting tactic of stressing other characteristics of the superordinate group of ‘righteousness and peace and joy’ which are more important than food and drink (*Rom.* 14.17). He can then turn the tables on the ‘strong’ by suggesting that the ‘strong’ themselves are not adhering to the values of the superordinate group. He stresses the importance of ἀγάπη, the predominant trait of the believing community, and calls upon the ‘strong’ to exercise this trait so as not to harm the ‘weak’.²⁸⁷ Nonetheless, Paul does undermine the observance of the Torah for followers of Christ.²⁸⁸ The ‘strong’ must allow it to continue if the ‘weak’ need it for their identity as Jews, or for the more practical purpose of maintaining their social and cultural positions in the synagogue,²⁸⁹ but, from the point of view of the early church communities (the superordinate group), it was ‘indifferent’ and ‘not positively harmful’.²⁹⁰

The Jewish Christians of ‘Inadequate Faith’

Brown, in his analysis of the Johannine community, identifies a number of groups associated with the early Johannine church which had split from its community over theological/ideological issues. Firstly, he identifies Jewish Christians of ‘inadequate faith’.²⁹¹ The faith of this group, referred to in *Jn.* 6.58-66, could not incorporate the

²⁸³ As Barclay (1996b, p 291) and Esler (2003, pp 342-344) comment, there is no need to identify the ‘weak’ with Jews and the ‘strong’ with Gentiles although Esler does think that the ‘strong’ are predominantly Gentile believers and the ‘weak’ Jewish believers.

²⁸⁴ Esler, 2003, pp 348-351. This is also reminiscent of Daniel who ate only vegetables and drank water when rich food and wine were offered by Nebuchadnezzar (*Daniel* 1.8-12).

²⁸⁵ Esler, 2003, p 343.

²⁸⁶ Esler, 2003, p 349.

²⁸⁷ Esler, 2003, p 351.

²⁸⁸ Barclay, 1996b.

²⁸⁹ Barclay, 1996b, pp 298, 303-308.

²⁹⁰ Esler, 2003, p 352.

²⁹¹ Brown, 1979, p 73.

Johannine understanding of the Eucharist as the body and blood of Christ. Brown argues that these unbelievers were Jewish Christians (they were being addressed in the synagogue and they were named as disciples). This discrepancy of ideologies resulted in these Jews leaving the community.²⁹²

A second reference to ‘the Jews who had believed in him’ occurs in *Jn.* 8.31. Here the issues seem to be the freedom of Jews and their descent from Abraham – both issues hitting directly at Jewish identity.²⁹³ The implication is that, as descendents of Abraham, they are still slaves, for Jesus is promising them freedom through truth (*Jn.* 8.32-33). The dispute increases with Jesus’ pejorative claim that their father is the devil (*Jn.* 8.44) and culminates in Jesus’ claim to be greater than Abraham.

Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I am. (*Jn.* 8.58)

This high Christological doctrine of the divine pre-existence of Christ conflicts with Jewish dogmatic monotheism. Again the dispute over these issues seems to have resulted in some Jews leaving the Johannine community.²⁹⁴

The Qumran Community

The Qumran community is an example of separation within Judaism on ideological grounds, particularly the purity of the Temple and its priesthood. The settlement at Qumran appears to have existed from the second century BCE to the first century CE. They were probably associated with the Essenes and isolated themselves in the desert in anticipation of the eschaton. Their isolation was a response to their belief that many aspects of Judaism had suffered impurities especially in the form of an invalid priesthood during the Hasmonean dynasty. Purity appears to have been a crucial issue, for purifying baths were an important part of their ritual.²⁹⁵ The antagonism to the Jerusalem Temple and its priesthood are illustrated by the conflict between the community’s Teacher of Righteousness and the Wicked Priest. Although the community was not schismatic in

²⁹² Brown, 1979, p 74.

²⁹³ The charge of slavery evokes the whole Exodus history of the Jews as God freed his chosen people from slavery and descent from Abraham is a crucial identity marker of Jews, being associated with the origins of circumcision.

²⁹⁴ Brown, 1979, pp 76-78. Brown (1979, pp 103-109) also notes that there is also a reference to schism in the Johannine community in 1 *Jn.* ‘They went out from us, but they did not belong to us; for if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. But by going out they made it plain that none of them belongs to us’ (1 *Jn.* 2.19).

²⁹⁵ For example, *Jewish War* 2.137-139.

relation to Judaism, they separated themselves from contact and they saw themselves as the true Temple with the true priesthood awaiting the apocalypse when their fortunes will be reversed and their isolationist stance justified (4Q171 4.10-12). In *IQS* 5.1-2, the community is described as those who

shall separate from the congregation of the men of deceit, in order to become a community, with Law and property, under the authority of the sons of Zadok, the priests who keep the covenant.

The ‘men of deceit’ are those who do not adhere to the Torah/covenant in the way that the community sees as appropriate for

one must not quarrel with the men of the pit in order that the counsel of the Torah may be concealed in the midst of the men of deceit. (*IQS* 9.16-19)

2.4 Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter I have outlined some of the theories and processes occurring in small groups. I have also attempted to provide examples of these processes from the available sources of the ancient Mediterranean world to validate the use of these processes against the criticism of anachronism. I began by defining a small group in the context of social psychology and identified some small groups known to be operating in the ancient Graeco-Roman world – the household, associations, synagogues and philosophical societies as well as the early church communities. Secondly, I outlined the processes identified as being involved in the passage of an individual through such a group; these include investigation, entry, maintenance in the group and, where appropriate exiting the group. Some of these processes can be discerned in the activities of the associations and synagogue communities, as well as in the early church communities. During the maintenance stage there is the possibility that group members take on positions of authority and power within the group.

With the context of the Gentile believers operating within a community consisting of predominantly Jewish believers in mind, I next looked at the influence minorities can have on small group development. This includes the evolution of leaders from the minority subgroups. Leadership in small groups has been extensively studied and I outlined the factors involved in choosing leaders from within a group. These include the cultural status of the proposed leader in the context both of the small group and the wider

community, the extent to which the proposed leader typifies the norms and beliefs of the group and the gifts and expertise that the proposed leader brings to the group. All these factors can be identified in the leaders of early church communities, associations and synagogues.

Finally, I looked at what social psychologists have to say about separate groups coming together to form single groups, the strategies which are used to facilitate this process and what can go wrong. The strategy which appeared to be operating in the early church communities was what is known as dual identity. The Jewish and Gentile believers were each allowed to retain their original identities but within the overall identity of the superordinate grouping of the early church. However, maintaining dual identity requires a delicate balance of power among the subgroups and, if this balance is disrupted there is the ongoing danger of schism.

In subsequent chapters I shall utilize these processes as tools to elucidate the events of the Jerusalem Conference and Antioch dispute. Firstly, however, it seems appropriate to trace the background and history of the Gentiles who became believers in the Antioch church. This I do in the next chapter.

The Gentile Believers at Antioch

3.1 Introduction

Luke, in *Acts of the Apostles*, describes the spread of the faith of the early church from mainstream Jews (*Acts* 2.5) to Hellenistic Jews (*Acts* 6.1-7) and Samaritans (*Acts* 8.5), thence to Gentiles associated with synagogues (*Acts* 8.27-39; 10) and finally to all Gentiles (*Acts* 13.46-9).¹ His account is generally regarded as unhistorical and to owe much to his particular theology of how the gospel was spread.² The conversion of the Gentile believers at Antioch fits appropriately within this scheme. Luke describes the spread of the faith to the Antiochene Gentiles tersely.

But among them [those scattered because of the persecution] were some men of Cyprus and Cyrene who, on coming to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists also, proclaiming the Lord Jesus. (*Acts* 11.20)

Luke, in using Ἑλληνιστάς, uses the same term he has previously used to describe Hellenistic Jews (*Acts* 6.1; 9.29). However, the contrast with Jews which occurs in 11.19 must indicate that Gentiles are referred to here. Nonetheless, most commentators accept that these Gentiles were, in fact, those who already had connections of some kind with Judaism.³ Such associations would satisfactorily explain how a first contact with Greeks could be made, through the existing association with a Jewish community. Some knowledge of the Hebrew Bible and beliefs of Judaism would also seem important for the understanding of Christ as messiah and for some of Paul's teachings in his letters.⁴ If the Antiochene Gentile believers were derived from the Greek adherents to the synagogue, it is relevant to look, initially, at the Jewish presence in Antioch in the first century CE, the Antiochene Gentiles who were associated with Jewish synagogues and

¹ Barrett, 2004, I, pp 49 and 420; Witherington (1998b, p 369) describes Luke as 'presenting a complex picture of the origins of the proclamation of the good news to the Gentiles'.

² Barrett, 2004, I, pp 49-56; Dunn, 1996, pp xv-xix.

³ For example Esler, 1987, pp 39-40 and 1994, p 39; Holmberg, 1998, p 405; Dunn, 1996, pp 154-5; Hengel and Schwemer, 1997, p 155, 200; Zetterholm, 2003, p 93. Zetterholm envisages 'the existence of a synagogue consisting of mainly Jesus-believing Jews'. Further evidence comes from the Letter to the Galatians (2.11-14) where the Antioch community is obviously composed of Jews and Gentiles.

⁴ Such as the references to Abraham in *Gal.* 3; 2 *Cor.* 11.22; *Rom.* 4.

the position of these Gentiles in relation to both the Jewish and early church community in Antioch.

3.2 The Jewish Presence at Antioch

The Jewish presence in the city of Antioch dates from the very foundation of the city, according to Josephus. He claims that Jews were awarded special privileges (citizenship?) by the founder of the city, Seleucus 1 Nicator, as a result of war service with the king (*Against Apion*, 2.39; *Jewish Antiquities* 12.119). The exact legal status of these Jews is debated and the translation of πολιτεία as legal citizenship has been disputed.⁵ Irrespective of their status in the city, the Jewish contingent at Antioch seems to have prospered, for Josephus can maintain that the Jewish race was especially numerous in Syria.

But it was at Antioch that they specially congregated, partly because of the greatness of that city, but mainly because the successors of King Antiochus had enabled them to live there in security ... Continuing to receive similar treatment from later monarchs, the Jewish colony grew in numbers, and their richly designed and costly offerings formed a splendid ornament to the temple. (*Jewish War* 7.43-45)

The Jewish contingent continued to prosper under Roman rule. Antioch, a large and prosperous city of the Roman Empire, has been assumed to have supported a Jewish population of about 22,000 to 50,000, representing about one seventh of the city's population.⁶ The religious observances of the Jews seem to have been accepted and protected, at least by the Roman authorities, for, even after the Jewish War, Titus refused either to expel the Jews or to revoke their rights despite the representations of the city (*Jewish War* 7.100-110).⁷ Relations with the Greek populace may have been more mixed. Malalas reports a riot between Jewish and Greek supporters at the circus resulting in the deaths of many Jews and burning of their synagogues (40 CE). The subsequent retaliation described by Malalas seems extravagant but, nonetheless, is indicative of ill feeling between Jew and Greek (*Chronicle of John Malalas*. 244-245).⁸ Such conflicts may have

⁵ Barclay, 1996a, p 243; Zetterholm, 2003, pp 32-37.

⁶ Kraeling, 1932, p 136; Hengel and Schwemer, 1997, p 196; Longenecker, 1990, p 68; Zetterholm, 2003, p 37.

⁷ Kraeling (1932, p 147) says that, under the Romans, the Jews were 'in a position to claim and find protection against chicanery'.

⁸ So Barclay, 1996a, pp 251-252 and Zetterholm, 2003, pp 114-116.

developed as a result of the plans of Caligula to erect a statue of himself in the Jerusalem temple. The plan came to nothing but the troops destined to execute the plan were assembled at Antioch. Later (66 CE) Antiochus, an apostate Jew, accused his father, a respected Jewish leader, and other Antiochene Jews of plotting to burn the city. The accusation aroused the rest of the city's population against the Jews and they demanded that the accused be burnt. Antiochus then further agitated against the Jews by demanding that the Antiochene Jews should sacrifice in the manner of the Greeks as proof of their loyalty. Those Jews who failed to sacrifice were slain (*Jewish War* 7.46-53). Yet, apart from these isolated reports, relations between Jews and Greeks seem to be peaceful until the outbreak of war in 66 CE. Indeed, Josephus relates that, at Antioch,

they [Jews] were constantly attracting to their religious ceremonies multitudes of Greeks, and these they had in some measure incorporated into themselves. (*Jewish War* 7.46-53)

It is this aspect of the association of some Greeks with Jewish synagogues and Judaism that will be considered next.

3.3 Hellenistic Sympathizers with Judaism

There is ample evidence for an interest in Judaism on the part of some Gentiles although the degree of interest is variable, from complete conversion including circumcision to admiring some aspects of Judaism such as the ethical values or taking a day off on the Sabbath.⁹ Gentile sympathizers donated gifts and sacrifices to the Temple and benefited the Jewish people. In Rome, Fulvia, 'a woman of high rank, and one that had embraced the Jewish religion' was defrauded when sending purple and gold to the Temple at Jerusalem (whether she was a God-fearer or proselyte is debatable for, without the mark of circumcision, this distinction is less obvious for women) (*Jewish Antiquities* 18.82). Luke tells of a centurion at Capernaum who built a synagogue (*Lk.* 7.5). Similarly, first century CE inscriptional evidence attributes the building of a synagogue at Acmonia to Julia Severa (who may also have been a High Priestess of the imperial cult).¹⁰ Harland views the mention of Severa, the benefactor, as an illustration of the ties that existed between the

⁹ Cohen has enumerated the various levels of interest and these are summarised later in this chapter (see p 116).

¹⁰ *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum* 766 from late first century Acmonia.

synagogue and the local elite.¹¹ Another inscription tells how Capitolina, a God-fearer (θεοσεβής), decorated the synagogue at Tralles.¹² In *Acts*, Cornelius (εὐσεβὴς καὶ φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν) gave alms for the people and was well spoken of by the Jewish nation (*Acts* 10.2, 22).

But alms-giving was not the only way by which Gentiles expressed preference for Judaism. Greeks, sympathetic to Judaism, also adhered to some Jewish customs. Josephus describes how Gentiles have adopted ‘our religion’ and how

there is not one city, Greek or barbarian, not a single nation, to which our custom of abstaining from work on the sabbath day has not spread, and where the fasts and lighting of lamps and many of our prohibitions in the manner of food are not observed. (*Against Apion* 2.282)

With specific reference to the Greeks, Josephus claims adherence to Jewish laws.

From the Greeks we are severed more by our geographical position than by our institutions ... On the contrary, many of them have agreed to adopt our laws; of whom some have remained faithful, while others, lacking the necessary endurance, have again seceded. (*Against Apion* 2.123)¹³

In more general terms, Josephus tells of pilgrims who came with contributions to the Temple and

Jews throughout the habitable earth, and those that worshipped God [σεβομένων], nay, even those of Asia and Europe, had been contributing to it for a very long time. (*Jewish Antiquities* 14.110)

Although the meaning of σεβομένων here is disputed,¹⁴ Josephus’s report on those who came on pilgrimage to Jerusalem from beyond the Euphrates, ‘a journey of four months,

¹¹ Harland, 2003, pp 227-228.

¹² Levinskaya, 1996, pp 65-66.

¹³ It is debatable whether this refers to ‘sympathizers’ or proselytes. Cohen understands ‘to adopt the customs of the Jews’ to be synonymous with ‘to be circumcised’ (1989, p 27 citing *Life* 23.113 and 31. 149).

¹⁴ Josephus uses σεβομένων τὸν θεόν (*Jewish Antiquities* 14.110) either as a description of Ἰουδαῖοι (so Lake, 1933, p 85) or as a separate category of God-fearers (so Cohen, 1987, p 419 and McElency, 1974, p 328) or even as a term covering both. Marcus (1943, p 509 footnote a) identifies σεβομένοι as ‘undoubtedly pagan semi-proselytes’.

undertaken from veneration of our temple and involving great perils and expense' is clearly not referring to Jews for

some without sacrificing at all, others leaving their sacrifices half completed, many of them unable so much as to gain entrance to the temple, they went their way, preferring to conform to the injunctions of Moses rather than to act in accordance with their own will, and that from no fear of being reprov'd in this matter but solely through misgivings of conscience. (*Jewish Antiquities* 3.318-319)¹⁵

As Gentiles, clearly they were not allowed into the inner Temple but were confined to the Court of the Gentiles. Josephus makes further reference to the presence of Gentiles at sacrifices when God was pleased to be present.

And he [Moses] was willing this should be known, not to the Hebrews only, but to those foreigners also who were there. (*Jewish Antiquities*, 3.214)

These foreigners also experienced the radiance of the stones on the high priest's garment which indicated the forthcoming success of the Israelite army so that

all the people were sensible of God's being present for their assistance. Whence it came to pass that those Greeks, who had a veneration for our laws, because they could not possibly contradict this, called that breastplate *the Oracle*. (*Jewish Antiquities* 3.217)

He is sympathetic to those who adopt a Jewish way of life, claiming that Moses, himself, welcomed such people.

The consideration given by our legislator to the equitable treatment of aliens also merits attention ... To all who desire to come and live under the same laws with us, he gives a gracious welcome, holding that it is not family ties alone which constitute relationship, but agreement in the principles of conduct. On the other hand it was not his pleasure that casual visitors should be admitted to the intimacies of our daily life. (*Against Apion* 2.210)

¹⁵ Schürer (1979 p 309) discusses at length the 'real Gentiles' who did not intend by their actions any affiliation to the God of Israel beyond the respect they would show to the pagan gods of any other country. But Esler (1987 p 155) disagrees, claiming that some God-fearers who were associated with synagogues of the Diaspora would certainly have made pilgrimage to Jerusalem and to the Temple. Cohen associates this text with those who 'adhere' in some way to Judaism (1987, p 419) and locates them in his categories 2 or 5 (1989, p 24).

There may be an indication in this passage of different groups of ‘aliens’ who adhered to Jewish practices to a variable extent; some who ‘live under the same laws’ may indicate proselytes or those attending synagogue while ‘casual visitors’ may have had only a passing respect for Judaism. There certainly seems to be a distinction between those who adhere to Judaism and those who go the whole way and accept circumcision, for Metilius, a Roman soldier who promised to judaize (ἰουδαΐζειν) in order to save his life, is prepared to go ‘even as far circumcision’ (μέχρι περιτομῆς) (*Jewish War* 2.454). As Feldman points out, this implies that it was possible to ἰουδαΐζειν but fall short of circumcision.¹⁶

While the evidence of Josephus might be disputed as exaggerated because of his bias in favour of Judaism, the evidence which comes from non-Jewish sources cannot be questioned in this way, as it often opposes the tendency of some Gentiles to value the Jewish traditions. Juvenal blames the conversion of proselyte sons on the Jewish tendencies of their Gentile fathers.

They [the sons] learn and practise and revere the Jewish law; and all that Moses handed down in his secret tome, forbidding to point out the way to any not worshipping the same rites, and conducting none but the circumcised to the desired fountain. For all which the father was to blame, who gave up every seventh day to idleness, keeping it apart from all concerns of life. (*Satura* XIV 96-106)

Here, it is evident that the sons are to be distinguished from the fathers in having taken the further step towards Judaism of being circumcised, whereas the father merely kept the Sabbath and abstained from pork. Feldman argues convincingly that such satire on the part of Juvenal is only explicable if these ‘fathers’ were a well known phenomenon to his audiences.¹⁷ The tendency of some Greeks to follow Jewish practices is ridiculed by Epictetus when he asks:

Why do you act [ὑποκρίνη] the part of a Jew when you are a Greek? Do you not see how each is called a Jew, or a Syrian or an Egyptian? and when we see a man inclining to two sides [ἐπαμφοτερίζοντα], we are accustomed to say, This man is not a Jew, but he acts as one. But when he has assumed the affects of one who has been imbued with

¹⁶ Feldman, 1993, p 349-50.

¹⁷ Feldman, 1993, p 348.

Jewish doctrine and has adopted that sect, then he is in fact and he is named a Jew.
(*The Discourses* 2.9.19-21)

Again, there seems to be a distinction between those who are ‘inclining to two sides’ and the one who has ‘been imbued with Jewish doctrine and has adopted that sect’. Epictetus is using this distinction to illustrate the point that ‘philosophers admonish us not to be satisfied with learning only, but also to add study, and then practice’ (*The Discourses* 2.9.17). Again Feldman argues persuasively that, to be effective as an example, those who are ‘inclining to two sides’ must have been a familiar occurrence, ‘one that is actually proverbial’.¹⁸ Tacitus, supporting the evidence of Josephus that some Gentiles brought sacrifices to the Temple and/or generally acted benevolently towards Jews, relates how

The most degraded out of other races, scorning their national beliefs, brought to them [the Jews] their contributions and presents. This augmented the wealth of the Jews. (*Histories* 5.5.1)

Augustine preserves Seneca’s low opinion of Jewry yet attests to their widespread appeal, quoting Seneca as follows:

When, meanwhile, the customs of that most accursed nation have gained such strength that they have been now received in all lands, the conquered have given laws to the conquerors. (*City of God* 6.11)

In this particular passage Seneca is talking of the Sabbath rest observance. He continues:

For those [Jews], however, know the cause of their rites, whilst the greater part of the people know not why they perform theirs.

This distinction between the Jews who understand their rites and the others who do not understand is interpreted by Feldman as evidence that ‘the greater part of the people’ are Greeks sympathetic to Judaism but not proselytes,¹⁹ but could also refer to the general populace.

¹⁸ Feldman, 1993, pp 346-347.

¹⁹ Feldman, 1993, p 346. However, the extent of commitment to Judaism by those who only observe the Sabbath rest might be debated.

Thus the existence of Gentiles who adhered in some way to the practices of Judaism cannot be doubted. Yet these descriptions cover a broad spectrum of practices. Benevolence to Jews, lighting Sabbath candles, keeping a Sabbath rest or fasting involved little direct association with Judaism or commitment to the God of Israel but synagogue attendance or monotheism were stronger signs of obligation. Further, attending synagogue or purchasing and consuming *kosher* food were public demonstrations of Jewishness.

Cohen has categorized the spectrum of meaning of 'Gentile respect for Judaism'.²⁰

1. Admiring some aspect of Judaism. This implies no adoption of Jewish practices or conversion from polytheism but some level of admiration for Jewish ethics and unity.
2. Acknowledging the power of the God of Israel. This too implies no conversion from polytheism or adoption of Jewish practices, merely an appreciation of the God of Israel alongside other gods.
3. Benefiting or being friendly to the Jewish nation. Into this category would fall monarchs and rulers who dealt kindly with the Jews. Jews viewed Gentile benefactors as motivated by some special attachment to Judaism but this was not necessarily so.²¹ Depending on whether he adhered to Jewish practices, Cornelius (*Acts* 10.1-48) may fall into this category.
4. Performing some Jewish practices. This category includes those Gentiles described by Josephus as lighting Sabbath candles, obeying some food laws, possibly also attending synagogue. Many Gentiles would regard people in this category as behaving Jewishly and may call them 'Jews' as a term of abuse but, for Jews, they would still be Gentiles.
5. Venerating the God of Israel and renouncing polytheism. The renunciation of polytheism was a major step towards Judaism. Such Gentiles may attain the status of 'resident aliens' observing the Noahide Laws and being reckoned righteous. Yet this still did not imply membership of Israel. If the description of Cornelius as

²⁰ The following categories are a shortened version derived from Cohen, 1989, pp 13-33.

²¹ Jews saw Cyrus in this way because he instigated the return from Babylonian exile and restored the Temple but these were political judgements on the part of Cyrus (Cohen, 1989, p 19).

‘worshipping God’ can be interpreted as monotheism then he belonged within this category. However, as a centurion he may have had to participate in pagan ceremonies.

6. Joining the Jewish community. Those males in this category were characterised by circumcision. However, this need not imply sincerity of belief as circumcision was common for slaves, conquered people in the time of the Maccabees or for male Gentiles marrying royal Jewesses.²²
7. Converting to Judaism and becoming a Jew. This final category involved monotheism, practising the Jewish Law and, for men, circumcision.

In the context of the Gentile believers at Antioch who were initially associated with the Jewish synagogue, it is mainly categories 4 and 5 which seem most relevant. They represent some commitment to the beliefs of Judaism and contact with Jewish communities but falling short of circumcision.

3.3.1 The Meaning of ‘God-Fearer’

The expressions, φοβούμενος and σεβόμενος τὸν θεόν, both translated ‘God-fearer’, have had many interpretations.²³ In the LXX,²⁴ and Josephus’ writings,²⁵ φοβούμενος and σεβόμενος τὸν θεόν applied to devout Jews as well as righteous Gentiles. Lake contends that both φοβούμενος and σεβόμενος τὸν θεόν are renderings of *jere adonai* – a common description of a good Israelite but also a pious Gentile in later Rabbinic literature.²⁶ In *Acts*, Luke applies the terms φοβούμενος [τὸν θεόν] (10.2, 22, 35; 13.16, 26), σεβομένων (13.43,50),²⁷ σεβομένη τὸν θεόν (16.14; 18.7) and σεβομένων Ἑλλήνων (17.4) more specifically to Gentiles who adhered in some way to Judaism and

²² McEleney, 1974, pp 320-322.

²³ Lake, 1933, pp 79, 85; McEleney, 1974, p 326; Cohen, 1987, p 419.

²⁴ In *Jon.* 1.9 ἐγὼ σέβομαι is the prophet referring to himself; 2 *Chron.* 5.6 (φοβούμενοι) is ambiguous, sometimes being taken as an example of ‘half-proselytes’, but for Lake (1933, p 82) it is the ‘whole house of Israel’, so also for McEleney (1974, p 326 n1); *Sir.* 1.14-17 (φοβεῖσθαι and φοβούμενοι) refers to Israel.

²⁵ Josephus uses θεοσεβής (*Jewish Antiquities* 7.153) to refer to King David but also to the consort of Nero (*Jewish Antiquities* 20.195). Σεβόμενος (*Jewish Antiquities* 9.205, 255) is a worshipper of foreign gods. Izates (*Jewish Antiquities* 20.41) before circumcision was able τὸ θεῖον σέβειν. For σεβομένων τὸν θεόν (*Jewish Antiquities* 14.110) see footnote 14 this chapter.

²⁶ Lake, 1933, p 85.

²⁷ *Acts* 13.43 also has πολλοὶ σεβομένων προσηλύτων which would appear to be circumcised Gentiles.

who formed a bridge between Jewish and Gentile Christianity.²⁸ However, the actual existence of a distinct group designated as ‘God-fearer’ has been disputed. Kraabel argued that the evidence ‘of such a class of Gentiles’ in the Roman Diaspora was not convincing because of the lack of archaeological evidence.²⁹ He claims that, in over a hundred inscriptions φοβούμενος and σεβόμενος are never found, while θεοσεβείς is found only about ten times but as an adjective describing Jews.³⁰ The discovery of the inscription from Aphrodisias, however, shows that θεοσεβείς could specifically designate Gentile sympathizers with Judaism. Here there are three distinct categories: the first being Jews and consisting of biblical/Jewish names, the second being a small number of proselytes, and the third being θεοσεβείς and consisting of predominantly pagan names. Yet even here, there appears to be a lack of a precise definition of what it was to be a θεοσεβής. Those included in the category included city officials who may well have had parts to play in ‘public pagan sacrifices’, eliminating the possibility of strict monotheism.³¹ Another is described as a ῥοικιάριος – a ‘maker of mincemeat’ who possibly dealt in pork products, suggesting that the strict food laws may not have been universally observed by these people.³² Two other appear to be athletes. Other θεοσεβείς seem to be more committed to Judaism for two are included with Jews in the δεκαν(ίως) – which Reynolds and Tannenbaum conclude to be a private group (a decany) who met to study the law.³³

Thus an exact definition of θεοσεβείς may not have existed even in the 2nd to 3rd century CE and the level of law-observance of these θεοσεβείς at Aphrodisias may well have varied considerably. The term does not seem to map exactly onto a well-defined group. Whether or not ‘God-fearer’ was a **technical** term for a Gentile adherent to Judaism in the 1st century CE remains unclear, but the literary evidence given above demonstrates that such adherents, whatever term may be used for them, did exist. As Overman has rightly argued, there is convincing evidence for Gentiles sympathetic to

²⁸ Levinskaya, 1996, p 120 citing *Acts* 10.22; 16.14; 17.4.

²⁹ Kraabel, 1992b, pp 123-124.

³⁰ Kraabel, 1992b, p 123. The difficulty associated with θεοσεβής is exemplified by the second century CE inscription found on a theatre bench at Miletus (*Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum* 748). The inscription reads ‘τόπος εἰουδέων τῶν καὶ θεοσεβῶν’. Lieu (1995, p 496) translates as ‘place of Jews who are also god-fearers’, while Schürer (1979, 3, p 167-8) assumes an error in the inscription which should read ‘τόπος εἰουδέων καὶ τῶν θεοσεβῶν’ – ‘place of the Jews and god-fearers’. More recently, Rajak (2001, pp 366-367) agrees with him.

³¹ Reynolds and Tannenbaum, 1987, p 58.

³² Reynolds and Tannenbaum, 1987, p 120.

³³ Reynolds and Tannenbaum, 1987, pp 28-30.

Judaism who associated themselves with the Jewish synagogues and this evidence is not only derived from Jewish sources but also from more hostile pagan sources.³⁴ It is in this non-technical way that the term ‘sympathizer’ will be used in this thesis – designating only those who had some sympathy for Judaism and were ‘loosely’ associated with the Jewish communities and their regular congregation. This ‘loose’ association with the Jews and their meetings would explain the ease with which a first approach could be made by the Jerusalem ‘hellenists’ (*Acts* 11.20).

3.3.2 The Social Status of the ‘Sympathizers’

The most detailed evidence of the social status of the θεοσεβεῖς comes from the inscription at Aphrodisias. On these stone tablets there are the names of sixty nine Jews, three proselytes and fifty four θεοσεβεῖς. All are male and Reynolds and Tannenbaum suggest that they represent heads of households, giving an estimate of at least a hundred and twenty six families represented on the plaques.³⁵ What proportion of the synagogue community contributed to the construction is unknown; some were probably too poor to do so. Even so, estimating the congregation at no more than a thousand, the names on the stones probably represent at least half of the families attending the gatherings. Of these the θεοσεβεῖς may have represented about a third or more. Of the fifty four θεοσεβεῖς mentioned nine are designated as a city councillor (βουλευτής) and about a dozen are craftsmen of some kind, one being a dealer in the prestigious purple dye. Two others appear to be athletes. Thus it seems likely that a significant proportion of the θεοσεβεῖς, who appear on the stone, were people of considerable social status in the wider community.³⁶ However, the Aphrodisias inscription only gives us information on the θεοσεβεῖς of Asia Minor at around the 2nd- 3rd century CE. Unfortunately similar information is not available for Antioch in the 1st century CE.

Nevertheless, the Jewish literature around that time suggests that some of the ‘sympathizers’ were people of wealth and importance in their own (non-Jewish) communities. The rich, women especially, have been mentioned as benefactors of the Jews. Josephus gives an account of how a Roman Jew of disreputable character defrauded

³⁴ Overman, 1988, pp 17-26.

³⁵ Reynolds and Tannenbaum, 1987, p 54, but they also comment that the θεοσεβεῖς may not have brought their households with them to the synagogue as sympathizers.

³⁶ Feldman (1993, p 367) claims that the θεοσεβεῖς were ‘of a higher social group’ than the Jews at Aphrodisias. However, this may be an exaggeration as one Jew is described as a χρυσοχόος (goldsmith).

Fulvia, ‘a woman of great dignity, and one that had embraced the Jewish religion’, inducing her to send gold and purple for the Temple in Jerusalem but then retaining them for his own use (*Jewish Antiquities* 18.81-84). Poppaea Sabina, the wife of Nero, is described by Josephus as a θεοσεβής and she interceded with Nero on behalf of the Jews in order to retain a protective wall which shielded the Temple from observation from the palace (*Jewish Antiquities* 20.195). Philo describes Petronius, the governor of Syria, as a man with some

sparks of the Jewish philosophy and piety, since he had long ago learnt something of it by reason of his eagerness for learning, and had studied it still more ever since he had come as governor of the countries in which there are vast numbers of Jews scattered over every city of Asia and Syria; or partly because he was so disposed in his mind from his spontaneous, and natural, and innate inclination for all things which are worthy of care and study. (*On the Embassy to Gaius* 33.245)

If this is somewhat fanciful, it suggests that Philo thinks it plausible. Even Philo attributes mixed motives to Petronius but his good disposition towards the Jews is illustrated by his successful attempts to avert the disaster of erecting a statue of Caligula in the Jerusalem Temple.³⁷ According to inscriptional evidence, Julia Severa, a relative of a senator, is credited with erecting a synagogue at Acmonia.³⁸ Another inscription tells how Capitolina, a God-fearer (θεοσεβής), decorated the synagogue at Tralles (third century CE).³⁹ Inevitably, inscriptional evidence suggests only that some benefactors were among the socially elite but gives no indication of their numbers in relation to the total company of ‘sympathizers’; those who were financially unable to make such a contribution left no lasting evidence of their association with the synagogues. Likewise, there are likely to be strong elements of exaggeration and bias in Josephus’s and Philo’s accounts, but, for them to have been taken seriously at all, there must have been some truth associated with the claims.

Evidence is also given of the conversion of eminent people to Judaism. In *Joseph and Aseneth*, Aseneth, the daughter of the chief of all Pharaoh’s satraps and lords, ‘from the moment she heard Joseph speaking to her in the name of God Most High ...

³⁷ Feldman sees this evidence as suggestive that Petronius was a ‘sympathizer’ (Feldman, 1993, p 349).

³⁸ *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum* 766 (first century Acmonia).

³⁹ Levinskaya, 1996, pp 65-66.

wept bitterly, and she repented of her gods she used to worship' (*Joseph and Aseneth* 9.2), and subsequently married Joseph. Although fictitious, it is suggestive that such things were possible. Josephus narrates an account of the conversion of the king of Adiabene, Izates, and his mother, Helena. Both became interested in Judaism independently. Izates was attracted to the Jewish religion while at Charax-Spasini. There

a certain Jewish merchant, whose name was Ananias, got among the women that belonged to the king, and taught them to worship God according to the Jewish religion. (*Jewish Antiquities* 20.34)

In a similar way Ananias convinced Izates too. At the same time, Helena was instructed by another Jew in Adiabene and converted (*Jewish Antiquities* 20.34-47). Because the desire of Izates for circumcision was judged to be politically unwise, Izates was advised to adhere to Judaism without circumcision. However, Eleazar, a Galilean 'who had a reputation for being extremely strict when it came to the ancestral laws' (*Jewish Antiquities* 20.43), expressed a contrary view, insisting on circumcision for the king; otherwise he was 'guilty of the greatest offence against God', so committing 'impiety' (*Jewish Antiquities* 20.45). As well as showing Josephus's desire to demonstrate that royal personages were attracted to Judaism, this episode also illustrates that diverse levels of Law observance were expected by different Jews.

Whereas a considerable degree of care is needed in interpreting these data because of the differences in time and place and because of the obvious bias (both for and against) on the part of the various authors, there does seem to be sufficient evidence that some of the Gentiles who were attracted to Judaism belonged to the middle to upper social and/or financial/economic echelons of Graeco-Roman society.

3.3.3 The Status of the 'Sympathizers' within Judaism

Meeks, in his assessment of the social level of Pauline Christians, lists 'class, *ordo* and status' as the factors which determine social stratification. Of these three, class, which is primarily a function of income level, is perceived as unhelpful in 'describing ancient society'.⁴⁰ Wealth as such had little social prestige. Its value lay in the extent to which it

⁴⁰ Meeks, 1983, p 53.

could be used as an inducement.⁴¹ Thus Petronius's satire on Trimalchio's dinner shows a freed and semi-literate slave (i.e. someone of low status in terms of birth and education) lording it over those of higher status in terms of birth and education because his wealth enabled him to exert considerable patronage (*The Satyricon*). *Ordo*, or orders, being the highest estates of imperial Rome society (i.e. the senators and knights) constituted only about 1% of the population and was unlikely to be represented in the communities of Judaism or the early church. It is, therefore, status which is the principal indicator 'for forming a picture of stratification in Greco-Roman cities'.⁴² Further, status is a multi-faceted marker and status can vary according to the particular group in which one finds oneself. Malina has enumerated four institutions in which status can be considered: kinship and fictive kinship,⁴³ politics, economics and religion.⁴⁴ These four correspond to 'ranking criteria' of loyalty/belonging, power, inducement and influence respectively.⁴⁵ Meeks, too, recognises the importance of seeing 'social stratification as a multidimensional phenomenon', with the need to assess the status of an individual according to each group to which he/she belongs.⁴⁶ However, the overall status does not necessarily correspond to the average of the individual rankings. Indeed, Meeks introduces a further category of social consistency/congruence which allows for the degree of dissonance a person might experience when their status within the various groups to which they belonged differed substantially.⁴⁷ Modern studies have shown that, in America, people suffering high levels of social inconsistency experience psychological stress or generally unpleasant feelings which lead them to try to remove the incongruities by changing society, themselves or their perception of themselves.⁴⁸

If this can be extrapolated to the 'sympathizers' at Antioch then the possibility of a degree of inconsistency in their statuses within the Jewish community and the wider community emerges. According to Josephus (*Jewish War* 7.45), the 'sympathizers' were Greeks and so probably ranked higher than the Jews in the status categories of birth and

⁴¹ Malina, 1995, p 371.

⁴² Meeks, 1983, p 54.

⁴³ The *collegia* which were common in the Graeco-Roman cities formed a kind of fictive kinship.

⁴⁴ Malina, 1995, p 370. Also included in some of these categories are other factors such as gender, age, legal status, occupation, language and place of birth (Reekmans, 1971, p 124).

⁴⁵ Malina, 1995, p 372.

⁴⁶ Meeks, 1983, p 54.

⁴⁷ Meeks, 1983, p 55.

⁴⁸ Meeks, 1983, p 55 citing Lenski, 1954.

language. In other regions some seem to have been wealthy enough to exercise patronage over the Jews and their synagogues, presumably expecting respect and loyalty in return (e.g. Fulvia, Capitolina and Julia Severa). If the Aphrodisias inscription is in any way typical, others may have held public office and may have ranked highly in the political arena.⁴⁹ Again relying on the evidence of the Aphrodisias inscription, their occupations/trades may have generally, but not exclusively, ranked higher than those of the Jews.⁵⁰ If this extrapolates to Antioch, then some of the ‘sympathizers’ may have occupied positions of moderate to high social status.

In contrast, although some of the ‘sympathizers’ may have enjoyed an elevated status within the general community, their status within Judaism seems to reflect their incomplete fulfilment of the Torah (i.e. lack of circumcision). The fate of those visitors from the Euphrates, who were unable to complete their sacrifices in the Temple, has already been noted.⁵¹ They travelled to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices but were forced to leave their sacrifices as they were not permitted to enter the Temple beyond the Court of the Gentiles. Josephus puts a good face on the incident by stressing their compliance, for they ‘conform to the injunctions of Moses rather than to act in accordance with their own will’ (*Jewish Antiquities* 3.319). Nevertheless, a degree of disappointment after travelling such a long distance must have been experienced. However, it is the inscription from Aphrodisias that gives most information on their status. Reynolds and Tannenbaum see the θεοσεβείς as ‘in some way not the same as, and, indeed, somehow inferior to, the majority of those in the synagogue, the Jews *stricto sensu*.’ They argue this on the basis of the positioning of the names of the θεοσεβείς in relation to the Jews. In the decanion face A the two θεοσεβείς are placed low on the list, whilst, on face B, they are listed below the first category which consists primarily of Jewish names and is presumed to represent the Jewish contingent (the first line of the inscription on face B is missing). This is particularly noteworthy since nine of the θεοσεβείς are designated as city councillors – a category which would normally rank high in any list.⁵² Similarly, the purple dye trader who is a θεοσεβής comes below Jewish traders of lesser importance such as poulterers and rag traders. Thus it seems that the Jews rank higher than the θεοσεβείς on the

⁴⁹ Reynolds and Tannenbaum, 1987, p 55.

⁵⁰ See n36 of this chapter.

⁵¹ *Jewish Antiquities* 3.318-9 quoted at p 113.

⁵² Reynolds and Tannenbaum, 1987, p 55.

inscription irrespective of their social or economic status. But, within the θεοσεβείς section, the normal protocol seems to operate; the nine councillors top the list, immediately followed by the purple dye trader. It would appear, therefore, that, whatever their social status within the wider community, the θεοσεβείς appeared to rank lower in the social order within the synagogue than did the Jews.

A similar conclusion on the inferior status of ‘incomers’ can be reached when the position of proselytes is considered. The proselytes had taken the further step of circumcision compared to the θεοσεβείς. Both Philo and Josephus have numerous passages which ‘praise the proselyte and enjoin upon Jews the equitable treatment of those who have entered their midst’.⁵³ So Josephus claims kinship with proselytes for ‘kinship is created not only through birth but also through the choice of the manner of life’ (*Against Apion* 2.210). Later, the rabbis declare that, when the initiation ceremonies are completed, the proselyte is ‘like an Israelite in all respects’.⁵⁴ Yet Cohen says that the proselytes probably had ‘an ambiguous status in the Jewish community’.⁵⁵ For instance, they were still not equivalent to the Jew ‘circumcised on the eighth day’ (*Phil.* 3.5) when it came to that most intimate of relationships - marriage. Thus a born Jew was forbidden to marry a bastard but a proselyte was permitted to do so,⁵⁶ while a female proselyte was not allowed to marry a priest⁵⁷ but could marry a castrated or mutilated man, unlike a born Jewess.⁵⁸ The Qumran documents similarly distinguish between born Jews and proselytes. The *Damascus Covenant* divides the people of Israel into four groups: priests, Levites, Israelites and proselytes.⁵⁹ Even Philo seems to make a distinction in his description of the exodus from Egypt. After describing the going forth of the men, elders, children and women he continues (my italics):

Moreover, there also went forth with them a mixed multitude of promiscuous persons collected from all quarters, and servants, like an *illegitimate* crowd with a body of genuine citizens. Among these were those who had been born to Hebrew fathers by Egyptian women, and who were enrolled as members of their fathers’ race. And, also,

⁵³ Cohen, 1989, p 29.

⁵⁴ *Babylonian Yebamot* 47b.

⁵⁵ Cohen, 1989, p 29.

⁵⁶ *Yevamoth* 79b; *Qiddushin* 67a.

⁵⁷ *Yevamoth* 6.5; *Qiddushin* 4.7.

⁵⁸ *Babylonian Yebamot* 8.2.

⁵⁹ *Damascus Covenant* 14.3-6.

all those who had admired the decent piety of the men, and therefore joined them; and some, also, who had come over to them, having learnt the right way, by reason of the magnitude and multitude of the incessant punishments which had been inflicted on their own countrymen. (Life of Moses 1.27.147)

If Cohen is correct in supposing that Josephus regards ‘to adopt the customs of the Jews’ as synonymous with ‘to be circumcised’, then Josephus, too, seems apprehensive over the commitment of proselytes to Judaism for, in discussing the attitude of Jews to Greeks, he says:

On the contrary, many of them have agreed to adopt our laws; of whom some have remained faithful, while others, lacking the necessary endurance, have again seceded.’
(*Against Apion* 2.123)

The evidence, therefore, suggests that even those Gentiles who had converted to Judaism up to and including circumcision were not totally integrated into the community of Jews. If this is so, then the θεοσεβειῖς must be expected to have had even lower status/acceptance than proselytes within Judaism and within individual synagogues. Perhaps the absence of inscriptional references to the θεοσεβειῖς, rather than raise questions as to their existence, as Kraabel suggests, might merely reflect their lower status and lack of influence and authority in the day to day administration of the synagogue and their inability to hold office within the community of the synagogue.

It might, therefore, be concluded that some of these θεοσεβειῖς experienced a degree of dissonance with respect to their position in the synagogues. In the wider society some of them may have exerted influence and possibly patronage but, apart from donations to the synagogues and Temple, their opportunities for exercising leadership and power within Judaism were limited. For the θεοσεβειῖς the only way of improving this situation was to take the further step of circumcision and become a proselyte. Obviously this was an unattractive and drastic option for most θεοσεβειῖς and they probably endured their ambiguous position rather than undergo the painful process of circumcision.

3.4 The ‘Sympathizers’ and the Antiochene Church

Having looked at the background and history of the Gentile believers at Antioch, it is now time to translate this understanding to their position within the early church. Crucial

in this translation is an insight into both their social status in the wider community — and thus their expectation of the status that others will attribute to them — and their status within the Antiochene church, which will be determined by the understanding of their position as members of the community as well as the position which other members of the Antiochene church attribute to them.

3.4.1 The Social Status of the Gentile Believers at Antioch

Paul, in *Galatians*, gives no evidence of the social status of the Gentile converts in his account of the Antioch church. Some deductions, that some at least were wealthy enough to contribute to the collection for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem (*Rom.* 15.26), may be derived from Paul's ready conformity with the request of the 'pillars' that they should 'remember the poor' (*Gal.* 2.10). As this request comes in the context of the 'pillars' adding nothing to the gospel which Paul was preaching to the Gentiles (*Gal.* 2.2-6), it seems obvious that the request for charity was directed particularly at the Gentiles. There is information by name on only one of the Gentile believers at Antioch, Titus. Little is known of Titus during his time at Antioch, other than that he went with Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem (*Gal.* 2.1), but afterwards he became a co-worker with Paul (*2 Cor.* 8.23) and travelled around, going to and from Corinth in charge of the collection (*2 Cor.* 7.2; 8.6) and possibly to Troas (*2 Cor.* 2.6). To be able to travel in this way implies a degree of wealth, either through his occupation or personal resources (see p 168).

In *Acts* Luke seems to make a point of focusing on the 'elevated status' of Gentile converts.⁶⁰ Cornelius, who is described as εὐσεβὴς καὶ φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν, is a centurion of the Italian cohort (*Acts* 10.1-2). Esler claims that such soldiers held a high social status and often their 'mustering-out pay' was enough to allow entry into the *ordo decurionum*.⁶¹ Philip baptizes an Ethiopian, 'a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians,' (*Acts* 8.27). The *proconsul*, Sergius Paulus, who was 'an intelligent man, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and wanted to hear the word of God' believed in the Lord after witnessing the blinding of the magician, Elymas (*Acts* 13.7-12). At Berea many women of high standing believed (*Acts* 17.12). Unfortunately Luke gives no details of social status in his account of the Antiochene Greeks. The only information

⁶⁰ Esler, 1987, p 184.

⁶¹ Esler, 1987, p 184.

we have about individuals at Antioch is the list of names cited by Luke as the leaders of the community there.

Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the ruler, and Saul (*Acts* 13.1).

Although *Acts of the Apostles* is a theological rather than historical work, it is generally agreed that some of the content comes from distinct traditions which have a historical basis (see pp 21ff).⁶² Barrett argues that a list such as this is unlikely to have been introduced by the author as most of the names add nothing to the narration; it probably depends on an Antioch tradition.⁶³ Barnabas, according to *Acts*, had been a land owner (*Acts* 4.36) and Saul claimed to be a Roman citizen (*Acts* 22.25). Little can be deduced from the names of Lucius and Simeon, but Manaen may have been a person of importance in the political field. He is described as a σύντροφος of Herod, the tetrarch, which was generally a court title meaning ‘intimate friend’.⁶⁴ Thus it may be inferred that the leaders of the Antioch community at that time contained some who were of reasonably high wealth and political status but that does not necessarily imply the same social status for the Greek converts.

Apart from the ability of the Antiochene Gentiles to contribute to the Pauline collection for the poor of Jerusalem (*Gal.* 2.10) and what can be inferred from the information on Titus, the social status of the Gentile believers at Antioch can only be derived from their origins as ‘sympathizers’ within Judaism. At the time of the evangelization at Antioch, the early church was not an institution distinct from Judaism. Thus the general attractions of Judaism, such as its antiquity, wisdom or ethical laws, were likely to apply equally to the early church and the synagogue.⁶⁵ Therefore, if the social status of some of the Jewish ‘sympathizers’ at Antioch was as has been presented above, it is likely that some of the Antiochene Hellenists who joined the early church as believers (*Acts* 11.20) were of a similar social status. There is no reason to suppose that

⁶² Witherington, 1998b, pp 111, 367.

⁶³ Barrett, 2004, I, p 599.

⁶⁴ Barrett, 2004, I, p 604, Dunn, 1996 p 172; Witherington (1998b, pp 392-393) adds that, if translated literally, it could mean that Manaen had the same wet nurse as Herod suggesting they grew up together as children.

⁶⁵ Feldman (1993, pp 177-287) gives a thorough analysis of the factors motivating pagans to associate with Judaism.

those Hellenists who converted to the early church came preferentially from the lower social strata of the ‘sympathizers’. It is true that the early church seems to have taken good care of its poorer members. *Acts* tells of a daily distribution to the widows (*Acts* 6.1) and Paul had no hesitation in undertaking to ‘remember the poor’ (*Gal* 2.10) and organize a collection for the ‘poor among the saints in Jerusalem’ (*Rom.* 15.26). But Judaism, also, prided itself on taking care of its poor. According to Josephus, those Greeks who imitated Jewish practices also imitated ‘our mutual concord with one another, and the charitable distribution of our goods’ (*Against Apion* 2.283). Certainly poverty-stricken proselytes could depend on relief in the form of charity and interest-free loans from other Jews.⁶⁶ There is even the suggestion that some proselytes converted in order to profit from this charitable support.⁶⁷ Thus, if the ‘sympathizers’ were attracted by the possibility of charitable handouts, the early church had no greater attraction than Judaism.

Besides the general motives of antiquity, moral codes, wisdom and the more self-interested motive of provision for the poor, Feldman lists economic factors among the reasons which attracted pagans to Judaism.⁶⁸ The Jews became influential as traders in many cities to which they were dispersed and a desire to profit from associations with successful commercial traders may have been an incentive for some Greeks to draw closer to Judaism.⁶⁹ ‘Sympathizers’ who attached themselves to Jewish synagogues from commercial motives might be supposed to have ranked below, or at least equal to, the Jews in the categories of wealth and/or occupational status and so represent the poorer segment of the ‘sympathizers’. Again it is unlikely that the early church attracted Greeks such as these who wished to profit commercially from the association. It is doubtful whether pagans would distinguish the early church from Judaism, but, even if they did, commercial motivation is unlikely to have provided an incentive to join. The early church was an eschatological movement. If the evidence of *Acts* is indicative of their commercial attitudes, the provision of future wealth was not a priority. Luke reports how

⁶⁶ Feldman, 1993, p 336 citing *Sifre Behar* 5.1 and *Gerim* 3.4.

⁶⁷ Feldman, 1993, p 336 citing *Yalqut Shimoni*, *Emor* 745 and *Eleh Devarim Zuta* 1.

⁶⁸ Feldman, 1993, p 336.

⁶⁹ Josephus (*Against Apion* 2.283) cites the diligence of Jews in their trades as something admired and imitated by those Greeks and barbarians who were inclined to follow Jewish religious observances.

as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. (*Acts* 4.34-5)

A similar lack of incentive to social improvement is evident in Paul's instructions to slaves and freemen: 'In whatever condition you were called, brothers and sisters, there remain with God' (*1 Cor.* 7.17-24).

It seems reasonable to assume, therefore, that the social ranking/status of those Antiochene Greeks who converted to the early church was similar to that of the 'sympathizers' to Judaism and included some who were of a moderate to high status in terms of birth, language, politics and wealth.⁷⁰ It is unlikely that it was the poorer sections of the 'sympathizers' who particularly changed allegiance. Indeed, it could be argued that it was those Greeks who experienced the most status inconsistency in their relationship with Judaism that were particularly motivated to change their situation.⁷¹ Within the synagogues 'sympathizers' had little opportunity to improve their status without undergoing circumcision but, in the early church, other criteria were emerging which acted as validation of a member's position and status. Baptism, as an initiation rite, and the gift of the Spirit, as confirmation of God's approval, were becoming significant rites of entry in place of (or alongside) circumcision.

3.4.3 The Status of the 'Sympathizers' within the Early Church

The previous discussion has argued that the Greek converts to the early church were derived from the 'sympathizers' who adhered in some way to Judaism. Some of these 'sympathizers' were of a higher status in relation to wealth, politics and birth than the Jews but were of a lower status within Judaism because their lack of circumcision meant they could not be initiated as full members. This status inconsistency may have been one of the factors which prompted their change to the new Jewish sect of believers in the Christ. It is time now to address the status of these 'sympathizers' within the early church at Antioch. In particular, I want to ask the question 'Was baptism practised as an initiation rite for Gentile believers at Antioch prior to the Jerusalem Conference and, if so, what status did baptism confer?'

⁷⁰ Meggitt (1998) has argued for low economic status of the early church communities but his rather restricted divisions of rich or poor have been challenged as by Martin (2001).

⁷¹ Lenski, 1954, pp 405-413.

3.4.2.1 Baptism as Initiation Rite

Baptism seemed to be the principal initiation rite of the early church;⁷² but baptism did not take place in isolation. In *Acts* Luke makes it very clear that the administration of baptism is the work of the believing community but God chooses those whom he wants by his outpouring of the Spirit as evidenced in the Cornelius narrative (*Acts* 10.44). Dunn identifies three elements in the initiation of a believer and these three elements belong to three distinct parties: the initiate, the believing community and God.⁷³

1. The initiates are required to undergo a change of heart/mind. ‘Μετανοήσατε’ is the command given by Peter as he addresses the Jews in Jerusalem (*Acts* 2.38; 3.19), repentance is demanded by Philip as he addresses the Samaritans (*Acts* 8.22) and by Paul in Athens (*Acts* 17.30) and is part of Paul’s preaching as he describes it in *Acts* 26.20.
2. The community is required to baptize the initiate. After repentance the Jews in Jerusalem are to be baptized (*Acts* 2.38); the Ethiopian eunuch was baptized as he and Philip came to water (*Acts* 8.36). Cornelius was baptized after receiving the Spirit (*Acts* 10.48).
3. Finally God will give the gift of the Spirit. It is this gift of the Spirit that is the most important of the three elements. This is evident throughout *Acts*, but especially in the Cornelius narrative (*Acts* 10.1-48) and in the comparisons with the water baptism of John (*Acts* 1.5; 11.16; 19.4). Ultimately it is the gift of the Spirit that constitutes God’s choice of a person. Dunn ends his chapter on ‘Δωρεά as the gift of the Spirit’ by saying

I conclude that ἡ δωρεὰ τοῦ θεοῦ was well known in the early Church as a standard expression for the gift of the Spirit which constitutes a person a Christian.⁷⁴

McDonnell and Montague, similarly, contend that ‘[t]he gift of the Spirit is the way of incorporating converts into the community of disciples’.⁷⁵

⁷² Beasley-Murray, 1979, pp 99 and 102; Hartman, 1997, pp 29 and 47.

⁷³ Dunn, 1970, p 91.

⁷⁴ Dunn, 1996, p 209. Witherington makes a similar comment, ‘receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit is essential to being a Christian, as is believing in Jesus as the Christ and Lord of all’ (1998b, p 361).

Although the gift of the Spirit is the ultimate criterion for determining God's choice of who is to be a Christian, baptism is still an essential component. The outpouring of the Spirit on the Cornelius household made plain God's choice but baptism must still be administered (*Acts* 10.44-48). In explaining his position to the Jews in Jerusalem Peter says:

‘If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder [κωλύσαι] God?’ (*Acts* 11.17).

Hartman asks perceptively

Peter should not prevent God. From what? From giving the Spirit which he had already given?⁷⁶

Obviously the gift of the Spirit, even though it was the most important of the three elements associated with the initiation of the believer, was incomplete without baptism. Baptism was still a necessary prerequisite. Hartman continues

he [Peter] could not prevent God from fulfilling his reception of these new, Gentile, Christians ... and from giving them life. They would, as it were, be deprived of both of these divine gifts if humans prevented them from being baptized.⁷⁷

McDonnell makes a similar point when he argues that, although God had taken the initiative by giving the Spirit in the case of Cornelius and his household, ‘this important sign of their belonging [i.e. baptism] is not to be denied them’.⁷⁸

Baptism, therefore, performs the function of a typical rite of passage for the entry of the initiate into the new group, as described in the Moreland and Levine model in Chapter 2.3.⁷⁹ It is performed by the group (or a representative of the group) and is an outward sign that the initiate has been found to be sufficiently acceptable to the group to

⁷⁵ McDonnell and Montague, 1990, p 37.

⁷⁶ Hartman, 1997, p 135.

⁷⁷ Hartman, 1997, p 135.

⁷⁸ McDonnell and Montague, 1990, p 36.

⁷⁹ Moreland and Levine, 1982, pp 137-192; 1984, pp 181-195; Moreland *et al.*, 1994, pp 527-555; Levine and Moreland, 1994, pp 305-336.

be included as a group member.⁸⁰ It is also a sign of the commitment and conversion of the initiate. In this way it corresponds accurately with the description of a rite of passage which symbolises a role transition acceptable to both the group and individual during group development (see pp 55ff).

The symbolic rituals associated with baptism also comply closely with traditional rites of passage which mark the role transition associated with incorporation into the group. The reclothing with Christ that occurs in baptism is strongly symbolic of new beginnings (*Gal.* 3.27). Beasley-Murray sees this new beginning symbolized in the 'necessity of literally stripping off and putting on clothes' in the course of baptism by immersion.⁸¹ Even more symbolic of endings and beginnings is the metaphor of baptism as a dying and being buried with Christ (*Rom.* 6.4 and 8; *Gal.* 2.19),⁸² for death is not the end for the initiate because baptism also promises the hope of resurrection (*Rom.* 6.4; 8.11; *1 Cor.* 6.14; *2 Cor.* 4.14; *Col.* 2.12) – a resurrection not to the same existence as previously but to a new creation (*Gal.* 6.15; *2 Cor.* 5.17). Such symbolism is a strong public statement of the change taking place as a result of the transition and of the discontinuity with the individuals' past identity as they take on the identity of group members.

3.4.2.2 Baptism in the Early Church?

Much of the information available on the understanding of baptism is derived from the letters of Paul and, it could be argued, represents later Pauline theology not the understanding of baptism current in the early, mixed Gentile/Jewish churches such as Antioch. There are some arguments that baptism was not practised in the very early days of the church but was a later development.⁸³ These arguments are based on the lack of evidence in the gospels that Jesus, himself, baptized the disciples (*Mk.* 6.8-11; *Mt.* 10.5-16; *Lk.* 10.1-12) and the episodes in *Acts* in which disciples, like Apollos, apparently

⁸⁰ Dunn also emphasises the importance of baptism to the community stressing the commitment which the ritual symbolizes on the parts of both the initiate and the community (1970, p 101) but also baptism as the sign of commitment for the initiate; baptism can be 'regarded as the occasion on which the initiate called upon the Lord for mercy and the means by which he committed himself to the one whose name was named over him' (1970, p 97).

⁸¹ Beasley-Murray, 1979, p 148.

⁸² In *Col.* 2.20 this dying is also associated with a dying to the 'elemental forces of the universe' – the spirits which govern this present age.

⁸³ These arguments and the opposing arguments are summarized in Beasley-Murray, 1979, pp 93-99 and Hartman, 1997, pp 29-31.

knew of Jesus but had only received the baptism of John (*Acts* 18.24-19.7). However, there can be no doubt that baptism was an accepted initiation rite for Gentile believers once the Pauline churches were established. There are references to baptism at Corinth (*1 Cor.* 1.1-13-16; 12.13; 15.29), Galatia (*Gal.* 3.27) and Colossae (*Col.* 2.12). But these postdate the situation at Antioch prior to the Jerusalem Conference.

Despite the arguments against the very early development of baptism in the church, there is evidence that baptism was an established practice by the time the Antiochene church came into existence. Firstly, Paul, himself, refers to his own baptism when he uses the inclusive 'we' rather than 'you' in references to baptism (*1 Cor.* 12.13; *Rom.* 6.4), thus suggesting that Paul was himself baptized. There is no indication of when Paul was baptized but the most likely time would be shortly after his conversion (i.e. some 14-17 years before the Jerusalem Conference as given the chronology in *Gal.* 2). Luke also envisages the baptism of the Israelites who heard the preaching of Peter at Pentecost (*Acts* 2.22-41) although this may reflect the understanding of the Lukan community rather than accurately reflect the events in Jerusalem. Secondly, baptism was an established practice in the Pauline churches and it seems unlikely that Paul would have initiated such an important entry rite without the approval of the mother church in Jerusalem. Paul demonstrates how important it is to him to have the approval of the mother church to ensure that 'he was not running, or had not run, in vain' (*Gal.* 2.2). Furthermore, the perception of an eschatological component to baptism, which Paul develops into a dying and rising with Christ, would seem to be present, at least in rudimentary form, in the earliest understanding of baptism.⁸⁴ It was present in the preaching of John the Baptist,⁸⁵ and is the message attributed to Jesus at his first public appearance (*Mk.* 1.15; *Mt.* 4.17).

3.4.2.3 The Origins of the Baptism of the Early Church

The idea of washings is evident in Hellenism. Sacred baths are found in the cults of Bacchus and Mythras, in Egyptian religions and the worship of Isis outside Egypt.⁸⁶ The underlying motif in these baths is the idea of washing and cleansing so as not to be

⁸⁴ Hartman, 1997, p 47.

⁸⁵ *Mt.* 3.1; *Lk.* 3.3; *Acts* 13.24 and 19.4 also Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 18.117.

⁸⁶ Oepke, 1933, pp 530-532.

unclean before the gods.⁸⁷ This same idea of purification is evident in the sacred washings of Judaism. Pharisees underwent ritual bathing after contact with anything polluting.⁸⁸ Entry into the cult of the Essenes seems to have involved bathing or baptism.⁸⁹ But these washings represent purification rites rather than initiation rites.

Early in the rabbinic era male proselytes were baptized immediately after circumcision while the entry rite of female proselytes was baptism alone.⁹⁰ This proselyte baptism conforms more closely to the initiatory baptism of the early church. However, there is some debate as to when proselyte baptism came into being.⁹¹ There is evidence of proselyte baptism in the rabbinic texts whose traditions date to the late first century concerning the debate over the status of children born of Jewish women from proselytes. The issue revolved around what makes a proper proselyte; Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus taught that a proselyte who was circumcised but had not performed the correct ablutions was a proper proselyte whereas Rabbi Joshua ben Hananiah held the opinion that the reverse was true – that a proselyte who was not circumcised but had performed the correct ablutions was a proper proselyte.⁹² Epictetus, in the early second century CE, seems to refer to proselyte baptism in the *Discourses* (2.9.21-22). But there are no definite references to proselyte baptism early in the first century CE which could indicate that this baptism was the original model for baptism of the early church. Some commentators argue that circumcision with baptism was the means of entry into Judaism even in the early first century CE. The argument rests on the assertion that Judaism was unlikely to imitate a ritual already practised by the early Jesus movement.⁹³ Yet proselyte baptism differed from the baptism of the early church in various ways; it seems to have been a purification of the impure Gentiles rather than an act of repentance and an entry into the approaching eschaton. It was also administered by the person themselves rather than being the action of the community.

⁸⁷ Oepke, 1933, pp 532-534.

⁸⁸ Torrance, 1958, p 167.

⁸⁹ O'Neill, 1997, p 97 citing *1QS* 3.9.

⁹⁰ Torrance, 1958, p 161; Oepke, 1937, p 536.

⁹¹ Beasley-Murray, 1979, p 23.

⁹² *Babylonian Talmud* 64a. Collins (1989, p 34) notes that these rabbis belonged to the second generation of Tannaim active around 90 – 130 CE.

⁹³ Hultgren, 1994, p 8.

The immediate origins of baptism in the early church seem to be the baptism of John the Baptist.⁹⁴ Jesus, himself, received this baptism (*Mt.* 3.13; *Mk.* 1.9; *Lk.* 3.21) as did some of his disciples (*Jn.* 1.40). John's baptism had been a baptism of repentance anticipating the coming messianic age (*Mt.* 3.7-12; *Mk.* 1.4-8; *Lk.* 3.4-20). (The very location of the baptisms in the Jordan recalled the momentous passage of the Israelites into the Promised Land – *Jos.*1). With the coming of Jesus, the messianic age had arrived. The baptismal formula

You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. (*1 Cor.* 6.11)

probably reflects a pre-Pauline understanding of baptism closely related to that of the Baptist's baptism.⁹⁵ The baptism of the early church symbolized, in some way, repentance and entry into this messianic age even though the full realization of the eschaton was still awaited (*1 Cor.* 1.7; *Gal.* 5.5; *1 Thess.* 1.10).

The ritual of baptism in the early church would be easily accounted for if there were continuity with the baptism of the Baptist. However, the absence of any mention of Jesus baptizing in the synoptic gospels and the outright assertion that Jesus did not baptize in John's gospel (*Jn.* 4.2) suggests that there was not this continuity. Beasley-Murray suggests that baptism was practised in the early ministry of Jesus but was abandoned as Jesus moved away from the Jordan and into the villages of Galilee.⁹⁶ More recently, Collins has presented a convincing argument that there was continuity between the baptism of John and that of the early church. Dealing with the contradictory accounts of Jesus' baptizing in *Jn.* 3.22-23 and 4.2, Collins suggests that *Jn.* 3.22-23 represents an earlier tradition than 4.2, which is a redaction.⁹⁷ In contrast, Schmithals regards any reference to Jesus' baptizing as having 'no basis in the older tradition' but being 'explained by the redactional interests of the fourth evangelist'.⁹⁸ Yet this seems unlikely for, as Collins points out, this is an embarrassment for the evangelist given the Johannine theology of baptism and the Spirit.⁹⁹ Collins' claim is that Jesus did baptize

⁹⁴ Hartman, 1997, pp 29-35; Dunn, 1970, pp 23-37; Beasley-Murray, 1979, pp 45-66.

⁹⁵ Hartman, 1997, p 84.

⁹⁶ Beasley-Murray, 1979, pp 70-71.

⁹⁷ Collins, 1989, pp 36-37.

⁹⁸ Schmithals, 1998, p 215.

⁹⁹ Collins, 1989, p 36.

throughout his earthly ministry but that this was either forgotten or suppressed as the understanding of baptism changed following Jesus' death and resurrection. Firstly, in the post-resurrection period, baptism became closely associated with the gift of the Spirit and it was integral to the Johannine theology that the gift of the Spirit could only be given after Jesus' death (*Jn.* 7.39); thus Jesus' baptizing before his death was a potential embarrassment. Secondly, the denial of Jesus baptizing would avoid any allegations from the Baptist's followers that Jesus' ministry was dependent for its authority on John the Baptist for, after Jesus' death, baptism conferred the Spirit and so was different from, and superior to, that of the Baptist (*Mt.* 3.11; *Acts* 19.3-4; *Jn.* 1-33).¹⁰⁰

If Collins is correct in this analysis, and I think he is, there was continuity between Jesus baptizing and the baptism of the early church. It was the theological interpretation of baptism that changed as a result of the death and resurrection of Jesus, not the rite itself. Hence there is no requirement to explain baptism in the early church; it merely continues what Jesus did. However, there is need to explain the baptism of Gentiles in the early church. The baptism of Jesus, and of John, seems to have been addressed to the people of Israel (as in *Mt.* 3.7; 10.5-6; 15.24; *Mk.* 1.4-5; *Acts* 2.36-38). At some point this seems to have been extended to Gentile believers.

3.4.2.4 Gentile Baptism

Few commentators address directly the chronology of Gentile baptism. Hengel and Schwemer, arguing that it was the 'Jewish Christians' who established a church at Damascus which consisted of 'sympathizers' as well as Jews, say of the community at Damascus:

[t]hey will also have given baptism in the name of Jesus – how else? – not only to Jews but probably also to uncircumcised godfearers.¹⁰¹

Schmithals gives a definite opinion that Gentile baptism originated very early in the development of the church, probably at Damascus. He envisages the apocalypticism of the Jerusalem church encountering a Jewish Gnosticism probably in Damascus.¹⁰² This led to a 'universalist and Torah-critical' church which was independent of the local

¹⁰⁰ Collins, 1989, p 36.

¹⁰¹ Hengel and Schwemer, 1997, p 85.

¹⁰² Schmithals, 1998, pp 74-80.

synagogues.¹⁰³ It was this church that Paul persecuted (*Gal.* 1.13) and to which he was converted with its law-free theology.¹⁰⁴ At the same time the early church spread within the Hellenistic synagogues of Syria which had a liberal attitude to Gentile ‘sympathizers’ so that the attitude of the Antiochene church was not dissimilar to that of the surrounding synagogues. It ‘opened its arms early on to the numerous God-fearing Gentiles within the synagogue’.¹⁰⁵ At Antioch Schmithals suggests that the baptism of Gentile believers was a baptism of ‘forgiveness of sins’.¹⁰⁶ In this way it corresponds more closely to the proselyte baptism of Judaism (described above p 134) as a ritual of cleansing and purification from pagan impurities.¹⁰⁷ Schmithals sees Paul’s theology as an amalgamation of the liberal Hellenistic theology of Antioch and the universalism of Damascus but, from the point of view of this thesis, it is his interpretation of the early baptism of Antiochene Gentiles which is interesting.

Paul gives little direct information on the subject of Gentile baptism at Antioch in *Galatians*. The main evidence must, therefore, be deduced from *Acts*. Most commentaries on *Acts* do not seem to address the topic directly but the opinion of the commentators can sometimes be inferred. Dunn appears to believe that baptism of the Gentile believers had taken place. He says:

James seems to imply that even for a non-Christian Jew, a genuine turning to God by a Gentile should be sufficient ground for the former to drop most of the ritual barriers to associate with the latter ... In this case, presumably, the genuineness of such a conversion would be sufficiently attested by belief in Christ, the gift of the Spirit, and baptism in Jesus’ name.¹⁰⁸

Witherington is more tentative. He says:

¹⁰³ Schmithals, 1998, p 79.

¹⁰⁴ Schmithals, 1998, p 73. Schmithals sees the ‘no longer Jew or Greek’ baptismal formula as originating in universalist environment of Damascus (p 74).

¹⁰⁵ Schmithals, 1998, p 79.

¹⁰⁶ Schmithals, 1998, p 79.

¹⁰⁷ Schmithals, 1988, p 223.

¹⁰⁸ Dunn, 1996, p 204.

The issue to be decided is what will be required of Gentiles so they can be full participants in the fellowship, fully accepted by Jewish Christians.¹⁰⁹

This seems to imply that the Gentiles were already *partial* ‘participants in the fellowship’. If this involved baptism then the conclusion must be that baptism was not regarded as sufficient for full participation. Conzelmann seems to assume that the Gentiles had not yet entered the early church for he says:

It [the Jerusalem Conference] does not have to do with the admission of the Gentiles as such, but with the conditions of their entrance.¹¹⁰

To some extent, Barrett and Haenchen avoid the issue for they argue that the events portrayed by Luke are totally unhistorical; in particular, the baptism of Cornelius which Luke represents as Gentile baptism prior to the decision of the Jerusalem Conference seems totally improbable. Haenchen says bluntly;

The whole theory with which Luke reconciles the legitimacy of the Gentile mission without the law ... with Antioch’s struggle for the recognition of its mission to the Gentiles is an imaginary construction answering to no historical reality.¹¹¹

Barrett cannot reconcile the Cornelius story and its conclusions with the subsequent debate at the Jerusalem Conference. His opinion is:

There were neither artistic nor chronological considerations that determined Luke’s plan; he simply presents a handful of sallies into the pagan world.¹¹²

However, he does appear to believe that the Antiochene Gentiles were baptized prior to the Jerusalem Conference for he regards them as ‘Christians’.¹¹³ Becker is the most positive. He understands the church at Antioch to be composed of Jews, Jewish ‘sympathizers’ and Gentiles previously outside the synagogue. Before the Jerusalem Conference he sees both groups of Gentiles as baptized members of the church.

¹⁰⁹ Witherington, 1998b, p 456.

¹¹⁰ Conzelmann, 1987, p 115.

¹¹¹ Haenchen, 1971, p 463.

¹¹² Barrett, 2004, I, p 52.

¹¹³ Barrett, 2004, II, p 711.

If God-fearers could be baptized without first being circumcised, then the uncircumcised in general could also be baptized, especially if they also accepted the part of the Christian message that Jews did not need to accept anew, that is, if they abandoned the pagan cult and adopted Jewish-Christian monotheism.¹¹⁴

Esler argues that the admission of Gentiles may well have started as early as the first church communities in Jerusalem where they associated with the Greek-speaking believers (such as Stephen) mainly because of the marginalization they felt in being excluded from the Temple worship at Jerusalem.¹¹⁵ Whilst the evidence for this association in Jerusalem is slight, Esler does go on to give an interesting and convincing argument for the early baptism of Gentile believers as a result of their spontaneous outbreaks of glossolalia.¹¹⁶ This account of Gentile baptism may have implications for the church at Antioch and, hence, I shall elaborate on it in greater depth.

Cornelius and Gentile Baptism

Esler links Gentile baptism with the story of the conversion of Cornelius (*Acts* 10). This story occupies an important place in Luke's account of the spread of the early church. Dibelius describes it as 'an elaborate narrative' which has 'no equal in the whole book [of *Acts*]'.¹¹⁷ Its importance is obvious from both the length of the narrative (one and a half chapters) and the way parts of the story are repeated.¹¹⁸ The various elements of the narrative are repeated two or three times so that Cornelius's vision is first told in the third person, then Cornelius repeats his vision to Peter and finally Peter relates the vision to the Jerusalem Jews (*Acts* 10.3-7; 10.30-31; 11.13-14). Yet there are a number of problems with Luke's use of the story of the conversion of Cornelius.

1. The emphasis on God's choice of the Gentiles and the impossibility that men should stand in the way of God's choice in some ways makes the Jerusalem Conference (*Acts* 15) unnecessary. The decision to accept the Gentiles without circumcision has previously been made **by God** and that decision has already been tested and accepted by the Jerusalem Jews (even οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς) ending in their being

¹¹⁴ Becker, 1993, p 86.

¹¹⁵ Esler, 1987, pp 154-159.

¹¹⁶ Esler, 1994, pp 37-51.

¹¹⁷ Dibelius, 1956, p 161.

¹¹⁸ Luke uses the technique of repetition at another important – the conversion of Paul (*Acts* 9.1-30; 22.5-15).

silenced and glorifying God, saying, ‘Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto life’ (*Acts* 11.18).

2. Peter’s vision of the sheet full of clean and unclean creatures is obviously about food and the Jewish food laws, and it is set in the context of Peter’s hunger (*Acts* 10.10). But the vision is then interpreted figuratively by Luke, and without any preliminary preparation, as referring to clean and unclean people.
3. There are contradictions between the accounts in *Acts* and that given in Paul’s *Letter to the Galatians*. Most obvious of these is the representation of Peter and his missionary role. Luke has Peter claiming the responsibility for the mission to the Gentiles from the very beginning (ἀφ’ ἡμερῶν ἀρχαίων) for it was through his mouth that the Gentiles should hear the Good News and believe (*Acts* 15.7). However, it is very clear from the *Letter to the Galatians* that Paul, at the time of the Antioch dispute, regarded Peter as the apostle to the **circumcised** (*Gal.* 2.7) for God was at work in Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised (Πέτρος εἰς ἀποστολὴν τῆς περιτομῆς) while Paul claimed for himself the mission to the Gentiles (*Gal.* 2.8). Peter’s action in separating himself and withdrawing from table-fellowship with Gentiles (*Gal* 2.11) also contradicts Peter’s personal mission to the Gentiles and tends to negate his visionary experience as related in *Acts*.

Commentators have debated these problems for some time. It is generally agreed that Luke used traditional sources for these narratives but adapted them liberally to suit his own theological and historical perspectives.¹¹⁹ His principal aims were to show how the gradual spread of the gospel worked outwards both geographically and ethnically to all peoples and places, and how that this spread was primarily the work of the Spirit.¹²⁰ To this end he used his traditional sources but added his own comments and interpretations and was more concerned for theological history than for chronology or factual accuracy.

¹¹⁹ So Lüdemann (1989a, pp 130-3); Dunn (1996, pp 131-4); Plunkett (1985, pp 465-479), Conzelmann (1987, p 80); Esler (1987, pp 93-7); Haenchen (1971, pp 357-63); Witherington (1998b, pp 339-341); Dibelius (1956, pp 95, 109-22); Barrett (2004, I, pp 49-56).

¹²⁰ So Witherington (1998b, pp 339-340). In his opening chapter Luke hands this commission to the apostles: ‘But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth’ (*Acts* 1.8).

Esler concludes that the Cornelius narrative has a basis in fact but not in the context of Cornelius. In analysing modern research on glossolalia in modern research by researchers such as Samarin,¹²¹ Hine,¹²² Goodman¹²³ and Kildahl,¹²⁴ Esler arrives at several conclusions.¹²⁵ The more relevant of these are given below.

1. Glossolalia utterances agree in several important ways across a number of cultural settings and languages, some of these settings being primitive and others more developed societies.¹²⁶
2. The recipients of glossolalia tend to see it as the work of the Holy Spirit and, as such, it is regarded as a prestigious event. Goodman, Hine, Samarin and Kildahl all rate as important in achieving glossolalia the desire to speak in tongues and the acceptance from the rest of the group that the speaking in tongues brings. Goodman claims that glossolalia ‘cements the congregation’ and acts as a strong identifier of the community.¹²⁷ For the individual, glossolalia brings reassurance and acceptance.¹²⁸
3. Goodman concludes that glossolalia is a secondary effect of initial ‘dissociation’ into a trancelike state.¹²⁹ She further concludes that the entry into the trance is facilitated by a number of factors. The actions of the leader/orator can ‘drive his audience into a high state of excitement’ – a technique she calls ‘driving’ - which leads to hyperarousal.¹³⁰ The entry into a trance is aided by conditioning factors such as music and repetitive chanting.¹³¹

¹²¹ Samarin, 1969, 1972, 1976.

¹²² Hine, 1965, 1968, 1986.

¹²³ Goodman, 1972, 1987, 1994.

¹²⁴ Kildahl, 1986.

¹²⁵ Esler, 1994, pp 41-43.

¹²⁶ Goodman (1972) uses her own field data from an Apostolic Spanish-speaking Pentecostal movement in Mexico City (Cuarta Iglesia Apostólica de la fe en Cristo Jesus) and a Maya-speaking, American Indian, Apostolic congregation in Yucatán Peninsula and, in addition, tape recordings of glossolalia from a Streams of Power movement in Saint Vincent (Portuguese-speaking), a Tent Revival meeting from Columbus Ohio and a main-stream Protestant church in Texas.

¹²⁷ Goodman, 1972, p 88.

¹²⁸ Goodman, 1972, p 89.

¹²⁹ Goodman, 1972, pp 58-60.

¹³⁰ Goodman, 1972, p 60.

¹³¹ Goodman, 1972, pp 76-84.

4. Glossolalia is contagious. Goodman, Hine, Samarin and Kildahl regard speaking in tongues as a learned experience.¹³² While Kildahl is insistent on the ‘learned’ aspect of glossolalia, Goodman does allow for a minority of people who ‘achieve dissociation spontaneously’, but she also says that ‘what looks like a spontaneous occurrence is not really that’.¹³³
5. It is easy to understand how outsiders can become involved when present at any enthusiastic group activity, carried along by the atmosphere generated by such a group. Yet this involvement and participation of outsiders can be threatening to insiders, for the outsiders do not, in fact, belong. Goodman notes that ‘great anxiety’ arises if a person speaks in tongues and has not yet been baptized by immersion. Such persons, although ‘very close to God’, are in grave ritual danger, from which only water baptism can save them’.¹³⁴

It is easy to see how outbreaks of glossolalia might have occurred in the early church for many of these characteristics are evident in the New Testament. Paul’s *First Letter to the Corinthians* suggests that the glossolalists were, at the very least, extremely enthusiastic in their outpouring; so much so that he felt the necessity to curb and regulate the glossolalia at Corinth (*1 Cor.* 12-14). Paul also says that outsiders and unbelievers were present when believers were speaking in tongues and would think that they were insane (*1 Cor.* 14.23).¹³⁵ A lack of rational focus may be implied by the distinction Paul draws between spirit and mind:

For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit [πνεῦμα] prays but my mind [νοῦς] is unproductive [ἄκαρπος]. What should I do then? I will pray with the spirit, but I will pray with the mind also; I will sing praise with the spirit, but I will sing praise with the mind also. (*1 Cor.* 14.14-15)

The liturgy of the early church did consist, in part, of hymns and psalms (*Col.* 3.16; *1 Cor.* 14.15) and certain words or phrases appeared to be in common use as formulae (as Μαράνα θά in *1 Cor.* 16.22). Both Goodman and Kildahl stressed the importance of the

¹³² Goodman, 1972, pp 70-86; Kildahl, 1986, p 355.

¹³³ Goodman, 1972, p 71.

¹³⁴ Goodman, 1972, p 87.

¹³⁵ μαινόμεναι could be translated as ‘possessed’ which could be either positive or negative. However, it is used also in *Jn.* (10.20) in a negative sense when Jesus is accused of having a devil and being mad.

leader and his oratorical powers in facilitating glossolalia.¹³⁶ The leader was certainly important to the Corinthians as Paul demonstrates in his letter (*1 Cor.* 1.12; 3.4-6). Paul does not specify exactly what the attraction of himself, Apollos or Cephas was; he simply uses the genitive in each case implying a *belonging* to Paul, Apollos and Cephas or the faction associated with them (*1 Cor.* 1.12), a belonging which might suggest the sort of dependency on the leader mentioned by Kildahl. Later Paul makes another allusion to the importance of the leader, referring particularly to oratorical skills, when unfavorable comparisons seem to have been made between his own public speaking and that of others (*2 Cor.* 10.10). Thus some of the factors associated with glossolalia in the findings of the researchers would appear to be applicable to glossolalia in the New Testament (or at least in Corinth).

Returning now to the Cornelius narrative, Esler claims that *Acts* 10 expresses a fundamental fact of the dawn of Christian history – the explanation for the admission of Gentiles to the early communities – even if the particular dramatic setting provided in *Acts* for that explanation is a development of Luke or the tradition before him.¹³⁷

He contends that there were places where the Gentiles were allowed into the early church communities and, once present at the meetings, were so affected by the preaching, chants and glossolalia of the believers that they, too, broke into ‘ecstatic utterances’.¹³⁸ Once the Gentiles had experienced glossolalia, the believers are confused but interpret this as the work of the Holy Spirit as Luke reports of Peter and his Jewish companions.

The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, ‘Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?’ So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. (*Acts* 10.45-48).

¹³⁶ Goodman, 1972, p 60; Kildahl, 1986, pp 354-359.

¹³⁷ Esler, 1994, p 50.

¹³⁸ Both Goodman (1972, pp 71-2) and Kildahl (1986, p 359) relate experiences of how strangers can easily become involved in emotional group proceedings.

Esler gives no indication of exactly where this outbreak of glossolalia by Gentiles may have occurred but I suggest that the church at Antioch is a prime contender. The chronicle of the conversion of Cornelius is situated strategically between the stories of the origins of the Hellenists who were ‘scattered because of the persecutions’ and their subsequent exploits in Antioch. The story is used to validate their actions in Antioch. Luke has given a very detailed account of the Cornelius narrative but, in contrast, has produced no details at all of the conversions of any of the Antiochene Gentiles. This is striking as the Antioch source which Luke seems to use is quite detailed in other respects (e.g. it lists the names of the leaders of the community at *Acts* 13.1). It is difficult to imagine that the original source contained none of the legendary conversion stories which were preserved by other early church communities. Therefore, in view of its situation in *Acts* and the contrast in detail with the subsequent narrative of the Antiochene church, it is tempting to suggest that Luke has used some of the details from his Antioch source to expand the Cornelius narrative.

In particular, the account of the spontaneous outburst of glossolalia by the Cornelius household does not fit with the understanding of speaking in tongues which is available from anthropological and sociological sources (as summarized above). A spontaneous outbreak of speaking in tongues, such as appears in *Acts* 10.44-48, is more likely to have occurred in a community where the Gentiles had been witnesses to glossolalia previously and probably in the context of liturgy in which there were hymns, chants and effective oratory from a leader of the community. We know that such an environment could exist. The church at Corinth provides an example of such an environment.

In addition, the fact that Luke records an occasion when glossolalia **preceded** baptism is so unusual and contrasts so markedly with his ecclesiology that it is likely not to be Lukan redaction but to be based on an early tradition. If such a situation actually occurred in the early church (of glossolalia preceding baptism) then this glossolalia would certainly be a significant contributing factor in the baptism of the early Gentile converts (Goodman, above, notes that glossolalia outside baptism is regarded as dangerous and a situation which requires rapid regularization). I propose that the tradition of this early outbreak of glossolalia is likely to have originated in one of the original churches in which Gentile observers were present. This, combined with the lack

of conversion accounts in Luke's account of the Antioch church, makes it possible, even probable, that the church at Antioch was the original setting for the story. Such a conclusion would suggest that the Gentile believers at Antioch were baptised at an early stage in the development of church and had received both baptism and the outpouring of the Spirit prior to the meeting in Jerusalem.

3.4.2.5 New Testament Evidence for Gentile Baptism at Antioch

Although there is no real proof on the baptismal status of the Gentile believers at Antioch, some evidence can be gleaned from both *Galatians* and *Acts*.

Luke's Understanding of the Baptismal Status of Early Gentile Believers

Acts provides some circumstantial evidence that Luke considered that the early Gentile believers were baptized prior to the Jerusalem Conference. This conclusion can be derived from Luke's use of the ἀδελφός in *Acts*. Luke uses ἀδελφός predominantly in three different ways.¹³⁹

1. He uses it for familial blood relations as in *Acts* 12.2 (James, the brother of John), 7.13 and *Acts* 1.14.
2. He uses it for Jews speaking to, or of, other Jews as in Peter's speech to the 'men of Israel' in *Acts* 2.29 (also 3.17) and their response to him in *Acts* 2.37. Similarly Stephen addresses the High Priest and Council as ἀδελφοί, as does Paul in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia (*Acts* 13.26 and 38), to the people at the Temple (*Acts* 22.1 and 5), to the Council in Jerusalem (*Acts* 23.1, 5 and 6) and to the Jews at Rome (*Acts* 28.17 and 21). When used as an address, the form is often ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, as in *Acts* 2.29 and 37; 7.2; 13.15, 26 and 38; 22.1; 23.1 and 6; and 28.17.
3. He uses it for Jews who are also believers, as in *Acts* 1.16; 6.3; 9.30; 11.29, 12.17; 15.1, 3, 7, 13 and 22.
4. After the Jerusalem Conference, he uses it for Gentile believers. In *Acts* 16.40 Luke seems to use the term for the household of Lydia after their baptism (*Acts*

¹³⁹ Barrett (2004, I, p 95) notes that ἀδελφός is used 'frequently throughout the book, sometimes of Jews, often of Christians. Christian usage reflects Jewish; believers are now all members of God's reconstituted family.'

16.14).¹⁴⁰ Similarly, ἀδελφοί is used of the mixed Jewish and Gentile community at Corinth (*Acts* 18.18) who had been baptized following Paul's preaching (*Acts* 18.6).

The first occurrence of the term ἀδελφοί in *Acts*, which does not refer to a Jew, is in *Acts* 15.23 when the 'brothers', both the apostles and elders, sent greetings to the 'brothers' who are ἐξ ἑθνῶν in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia. The repeated use of 'brothers' in this verse to refer both to the people in Jerusalem and the Gentiles of Antioch, Syria and Cilicia suggests strongly that these Gentiles were regarded by Luke as comparable members of the early church.¹⁴¹ In *Acts* 15.23 ἀδελφοί is used as a form of address to the Gentiles but later, the term, ἀδελφοί, is not only used in direct speech but is also used descriptively in the narrative of the Antiochene community to whom the Apostolic Decree was sent (*Acts* 15.32, 33, 36 and 40).¹⁴² I suggest that Luke's use of ἀδελφοί in *Acts* 15 is evidence that Luke considered the Antiochene Gentile believers to be members of the early church prior to the Jerusalem Conference. But this represents an understanding some 20 to 30 years after the event.

The Evidence of Paul's Letter to the Galatians

Paul's only mention of baptism in the *Letter to the Galatians* occurs in *Gal.* 3.27 where he is addressing the Galatian community of believers, not talking about the Antiochene church. However, in his autobiographical introduction to the letter, Paul states that he had been preaching his gospel for at least fourteen years¹⁴³ prior to the visit to Jerusalem for the Jerusalem Conference. By Paul's own account, his mission to the Gentiles originated at the revelation of the Lord Jesus to him (*Gal.* 1.11-12; 15-17) at the start of his ministry. It is difficult to believe that Paul's gospel, which he preached to the Gentiles, had not included baptism during a period of evangelization as long as twelve to seventeen years, especially as he had, after three years, visited and stayed with Cephas for fifteen days (*Gal.* 1.18). Paul's letters give verification that Gentile baptism was

¹⁴⁰ This assumes that Lydia, a σεβομένη τὸν θεόν, was a Gentile 'sympathizer' (as those ἐκ ... τῶν τε σεβομένων Ἑλλήνων πλῆθος in *Acts* 17.4) and not a devout Jew.

¹⁴¹ Lüdemann sees this verse and those surrounding it as originating from Luke and not being part of the tradition (1989a, p 168).

¹⁴² Barrett uses the same argument saying 'the letter takes up the use of ἀδελφοί ... [t]hey are nevertheless brothers because they are Christians' (2004, II, p 740).

¹⁴³ Because of the Jewish dating of years this is a minimum of twelve years but, if the dating is from the previous visit to Cephas (*Gal.* 1.18), the period of Paul's evangelisation could be as great as seventeen years (Dunn, 1993, p 87).

definitely practised shortly after the Jerusalem Conference as is evidenced in the Galatian and Corinthian churches (*Gal.* 3.27; *1 Cor.* 1.14).

The evidence of *Acts* and *Galatians* suggests, although not conclusively, that the Gentile believers were members of the early church prior to the Jerusalem Conference and that their entry was *via* the baptismal rite of initiation. Yet, if the Gentiles in the early churches such as Antioch had become baptized members of the early church prior to the Jerusalem Conference, had this taken place independently of the authority of the mother church in Jerusalem? On the evidence of both *Acts* and the Paul's *Letter to the Galatians*, it seems unlikely that such an important decision as baptizing pagans could be taken apart from the mother church at Jerusalem.

In the *Letter to the Galatians*, Paul is attempting to walk a narrow path between emphasising that his own apostleship is from God and, hence, independent of the Jerusalem church, but, at the same time, stressing the approval of the Jerusalem church for his gospel as totally compatible with their gospel, so maintaining the unity of the early church.¹⁴⁴ Typical of this attitude is his calling the principal apostles οἱ δοκοῦντες, implying the recognised status of these people but also distancing himself from any overestimation of their importance (*Gal.* 2.6).¹⁴⁵ Paul gives no indication that the Jerusalem church summoned him to appear before them; he took the initiative of going to Jerusalem because of a revelation (ἀποκάλυψις). Nonetheless there are strong indications that Paul was seeking the approval of the mother church for his gospel. He laid before them the gospel that he preached; ἀνατίθηναι has a sense of presenting for approval, consideration, consultation or for someone's opinion.¹⁴⁶ The possibility that, if the mother church did not approve Paul's gospel, he, Paul, could be running ἐῖς κενόν' (*Gal.* 2.2) suggests that the consultation/consideration was not between equal partners.¹⁴⁷ The Jerusalem church might disapprove of Paul's gospel such that he might

¹⁴⁴ Dunn, 1993, pp 91-94; Bruce, 1982, pp 107-111; Martyn, 1997, pp 190-191; Longenecker, 1990, p 48.

¹⁴⁵ Holmberg, 1978, p 24, describes Paul's attitude to those of repute as 'ambivalent' in that he 'implicitly recognises their authority to judge his gospel' but also declares himself independent of them as his gospel came directly from God by divine revelation (*Gal.* 1.8, 12).

¹⁴⁶ Witherington, 1998a, p 133; Dunn, 1993, p 91; Longenecker, 1990, p 47; Martyn, 1997, p 191; Bruce, 1982, p 109. The emphasis may be on that of inferior to superior as in *2 Macc.* 3.9 or between friends as in Plutarch's *Moralia* 772D.

¹⁴⁷ So Witherington (1998a, pp 133-134) who describes the relationship as 'asymmetrical' – Paul was in no position to require something to be added (*Gal.* 2.6) to the gospel of the mother church but the Jerusalem church could have added something to Paul's gospel. Also Longenecker (1990, p 49) who claims that Paul's 'commission was not derived from Jerusalem, but could not be executed effectively except in fellowship with

be running in vain but Paul's disapproval of the gospel of the Jerusalem church was unlikely to carry similar consequences for the mother church. At the very minimum, Paul was dependent on the Jerusalem church's approval to maintain the unity between his gospel and theirs;¹⁴⁸ he needed the authoritative weight of the 'pillars' behind him in continuing his own mission to the Gentiles.¹⁴⁹

A similar picture of the Antiochene church, which needed the approval of the Jerusalem church, emerges from *Acts*. Before the Jerusalem Conference the news that 'those scattered because of the persecution' had begun to preach the gospel to Hellenists reached the ears of the Jerusalem church and they sent Barnabas to investigate (*Acts* 11.18-23). Luke presents Barnabas as an official representative of the Jerusalem church sent to inspect the Antiochene church and either approve or put an end to the practices taking place there (*Acts* 11.23-24).¹⁵⁰ The historicity of this is confirmed, at least partly, by Paul's *Letter to the Galatians* in which Barnabas is recognized as a principal leader of the Antiochene church and a suitable person to journey to Jerusalem and confer with the church there (*Gal.* 2.1, 9). Some commentators see this section as unhistorical and the means by which Luke introduced Barnabas into Antioch, knowing of Barnabas's future involvement with the Antiochene church from his Antioch source.¹⁵¹ However, as Barrett correctly points out,¹⁵² there is other evidence from the Pauline letters that the Jerusalem church (or at least some within that church) sent investigators out to supervise the daughter churches.¹⁵³ Paul's *Letter to the Galatians* demonstrates very effectively how 'some people from James' came down to Antioch and, having convinced Cephas of their rightness in the matter, together were able to overturn the normal practices of table fellowship which had previously existed in that church (*Gal.* 2.12-13).¹⁵⁴ Later, in *Acts*, it was the interference of certain people from Judaea (*Acts* 15.1) which precipitated the

Jerusalem', and Holmberg (1978, p 15) who says that the 'dialectic between being independent of and being acknowledged by Jerusalem is the keynote of this important text'.

¹⁴⁸ The emphasis on maintaining unity is stressed by Dunn (1993, pp 93-94) and Martyn (1997, pp 192-193).

¹⁴⁹ Dunn, 1993, p 103. Also Holmberg (1978, p 15) who sees Paul as 'careful to point out to his opponents and detractors the incontrovertible fact that he was officially and irreversibly acknowledged by the Jerusalem "pillars" as Apostle to the Gentiles, with a competence and gospel of his own'.

¹⁵⁰ So Barrett, 2004, I, p 552 and Holmberg, 1978, p 62. Luke similarly has the Jerusalem church sending Peter and John to confirm the work of Philip among the Samaritans (*Acts* 8.14).

¹⁵¹ Lüdemann, 1989a, p 134.

¹⁵² Barrett, 2004, pp 547-548 also Holmberg, 1978, pp 44-50.

¹⁵³ The judaizers (*Gal.* 6.12) appear to have originated from Jerusalem according to the rhetoric against the 'present Jerusalem' of *Gal.* 4.25-26.

¹⁵⁴ Whether the primary influence on the Antiochene Jews was Cephas or 'those from James' matters little. Both symbolize the Jerusalem church.

decision of the Antiochene church to send delegates to Jerusalem (*Acts* 15.2). Holmberg, rightly, points out that the dependency of the Antiochene church is demonstrated by this decision to send delegates; only in Jerusalem could its practices be sanctioned.¹⁵⁵

Holmberg, who has performed a detailed analysis of power structures in the early church, concludes that the Antiochene church was 'bound to the mother church in Jerusalem'.¹⁵⁶ He attributes the authority of the mother church to a variety of reasons:¹⁵⁷

1. Jerusalem was the centre of the church in terms of salvation-history. Jerusalem was the theological and juridical centre of Judaism and the place where the second coming was expected to happen.
2. Jerusalem was the place where Jesus had died and was raised from the dead and where the Spirit was first given to the disciples.
3. Jerusalem was the place where the first disciples of the Lord, those who had known Jesus in the flesh, resided. These people, above all others, were the ones who passed on the traditions of the early church. They were the indispensable links between the historical Jesus and the present church.

Holmberg sees the practical application of this dependency of Antioch on Jerusalem in the collection (*Gal.* 2.10). The Jerusalem Conference may have recognized the grace of God equally at work in Paul and Barnabas's apostleship to the Gentiles as in that of Peter, James and John's mission to the circumcised (*Gal.* 2.7-9) but, nonetheless, the mission to the Gentiles in the Diaspora was expected to pay tribute to the mission to circumcised in Jerusalem (*Gal.* 2.10).¹⁵⁸

The evidence presented above would suggest that a daughter church such as Antioch was unlikely to take the important step of baptizing Gentile believers without

¹⁵⁵ Holmberg, 1978, pp 18-19.

¹⁵⁶ Holmberg, 1978, p 18.

¹⁵⁷ Holmberg, 1978, pp 18-19, 27, 53, 183.

¹⁵⁸ Holmberg, 1978, p 54. Taylor (1992, pp 116-122) argues that 'remembering the poor' in the context of *Gal.* 2.10 was not a call for financial support for the mother church but rather a promise to 'exercise their freedom and independence with due consideration for the implications of their conduct for Christian communities in Judaea' (p 121). Taylor's evidence for this different interpretation is not greater than that of the majority of commentators who favour the financial collection for Jerusalem as the explanation of *Gal.* 2.10, but even if he is correct, this still shows deference and dependence of the Antioch church on the mother church of Jerusalem.

the explicit permission of the mother church at Jerusalem. Perhaps it was at the Jerusalem Conference that the question of Gentile baptism arose. Yet this seems unlikely for two reasons. Firstly, neither Paul nor Luke makes any mention of baptism in their accounts; both do state that circumcision was not required of Gentile believers (Luke stresses this in *Acts* 15 and Paul refers to it in relation to Titus in *Gal.* 2.3) but neither refers to baptism at this point. Secondly, at the Jerusalem Conference, the leaders (οἱ δοκοῦντες εἰναι τι) added nothing to Paul's gospel (*Gal.* 2.6) which he preached to the Gentiles and which he set before the Jerusalem leaders privately (*Gal.* 2.2). They acknowledged that God had entrusted the gospel of the uncircumcised to Paul just as the gospel to circumcised had been entrusted to Peter and that God worked through them both (*Gal.* 2.7-8). Paul is adamant that nothing was added to his gospel by the Jerusalem leaders, who would surely have added baptism to his gospel at this time if it had not already been part of the gospel that Paul preached to the Gentiles. The most that could have resulted from the Jerusalem Conference was confirmation of baptism for Gentiles.

Thus the indications from *Acts* are that Luke considered the Gentile believers to be baptized members of the early church prior to the Jerusalem Conference. The chronology of Paul, in *Galatians*, suggests that the Gentile mission was more than a decade old at the time of the Jerusalem Conference. Further, the conclusion must be drawn that not only were the Gentile believers in the early church baptized but that the mother church at Jerusalem approved of their baptism before the meeting in Jerusalem took place.

3.5 Conclusions

I have attempted to trace, in this chapter, the origins of the Gentile converts at Antioch. They originated from the 'sympathizers' who were attracted to Judaism and attached themselves, to varying degrees, to the synagogues of the Diaspora, particularly at Antioch. I have concluded that some, at least, were of a high social status in some respects in their wider community but would have been of lower status in Judaism. They may have been benefactors of the synagogues but, without circumcision, they could not exercise the influence of full membership. They would experience some form of status inconsistency and this status inconsistency may have provided one motive for conversion to the early church.

In contrast, the early church was developing its own initiation rite of baptism which appears to have been administered to believers from the earliest days of its history. Not involving circumcision, baptism was more acceptable to Gentiles. Gentile believers experienced the initiation ceremony of baptism whereas the ‘sympathizers’ to Judaism underwent no such initiation rite. Hence it is probable that the Gentile believers considered themselves more fully members of the early church than had the ‘sympathizers’ within Judaism. It is this different understanding of belonging, and its consequences, which will be addressed in the next chapter.

The Influence of the Gentile Believers at Antioch

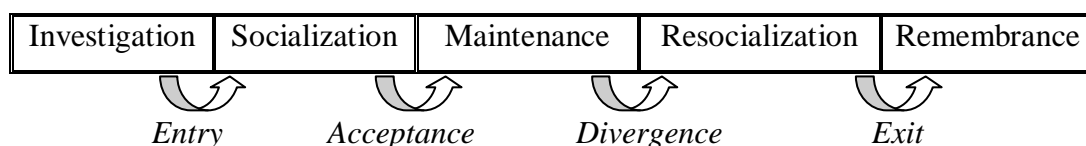
4.1 Introduction

So far I have identified the Gentile believers at Antioch as derived from the ‘sympathizers’ to Judaism some of whom were of a moderate to high social status in the wider community. Unlike these ‘sympathizers’ within Judaism, the Gentile believers had undergone an initiation rite of baptism into the early church community which could confer a greater sense of belonging than would be apparent in the ‘sympathizers’. In this chapter I want to investigate the effects that this greater sense of belonging would have both on the Gentile believers and on the other members of the Antiochene church, using the tools of social psychology outlined in Chapter 2. In addition, *Acts* testifies that Gentiles became believers in significant numbers at Antioch.¹ If there were significant numbers of Gentile believers at Antioch the Gentile believers would become a distinct subgroup within the Antiochene church introducing the possibility of their exerting an influence greater than would be possible for individual newcomers into a group. The facts of their significant numbers and their baptismal status raises the possibility that the Gentile believers had a different understanding of their status within the early church than did of Gentile ‘sympathizers’ within Judaism. The understanding of the status of the Gentile believers within the Antiochene church, both by themselves and by the other members of the church, determined the influence and power they were able to exert within the early church community.

4.2 The Understanding of Baptism by the Various Factions within the Early Church

The socio-psychological analysis of Moreland and Levine, expounded in Chapter 2.3 (see p 48), identified four possible role transitions in the process of passage through a group. These are shown in the diagram below.

¹ Josephus acknowledges the large numbers of Gentiles interested in Judaism at Antioch (*Jewish War* 7.45). *Acts* gives some confirmation of a large influx of Gentiles into the church (*Acts* 11.21) and it was the situation in the church at Antioch that precipitated the Jerusalem Conference with its agenda regarding Gentile believers (*Acts* 15).



In terms of initiation there are two important transitions: the *entry* which symbolizes the movement from enquirer to new member who is not yet completely socialized and the *acceptance* which symbolizes the movement from new member to full member. As Moreland and Levine point out,² these role transitions are fluid and *entry* and *acceptance* can often be combined into a single initiation rite. With these definitions in mind, it is time to investigate the understanding of the Gentile initiation rite of baptism by some of the factions within the early church both at Antioch and Jerusalem, especially the two extremes of understanding as exemplified by Paul at one end of the scale and his Torah-observant opponents at the other (*Gal.* 6.12-13). Inevitably this discussion on rites of passage will focus not only on the importance of baptism but also on circumcision as a prerequisite of entry into the community of Israel.³

4.2.1 Paul's Opponents' understanding of Gentile baptism

In the letters of Paul a number of opponents can be identified. There are the 'false brothers' of *Galatians* 2.4 (ψευδαδελφοί), the 'troublemakers' also of *Galatians* 6.12-13 (οἱ ταρασσόντες), the 'false apostles' (ψευδαπόστολοι) of 2 *Cor.* 11.13 who may or may not be connected with the 'super apostles' (ὑπερλίαν ἀπόστολοι) of 2 *Cor.* 11.5 and 12.11,⁴ those who question Paul's apostolic credentials and authority (1 *Cor.* 9.1-2; 15.3-11) and finally the 'dogs and evil-doers' who mutilate the flesh of *Phil.* 3.2-3. Of these, the opponents in 2 *Corinthians* would certainly seem to be associated with the Jerusalem church in some way (hence the references to apostles and super apostles) but Paul does not explain explicitly what they teach, what the different gospel and different Spirit involves which the false apostles (and super apostles?) of 2 *Cor.* 11.4 are preaching to the Corinthian church.⁵ Similarly, there is no indication of the teaching on baptism and/or entry into the early church among the various factions of 1 *Corinthians*

² Moreland and Levine, 1982, pp 150-151.

³ Circumcision was a required sign of the covenant with Yahweh (*Gen.* 17.9-14).

⁴ Kreitzer (1996) summarises the diverse theories on the identity of the 'false apostles' of 2 *Corinthians* (pp 74-82).

⁵ Theories range from 'Judaizers' as in *Galatians* (so Barrett, 1973, pp 6-7 ; Käsemann, 1942, pp 33-71; Lüdemann, 1989b, pp 80-97), proponents of the 'Divine man' Christology foremost of whom it is speculated are the Hellenists (so Georgi, 1987; Friedrich, 1963, pp 1-12) and proto-gnostics including Apollos who preach an emphasis on wisdom (so Bultmann, 1985; Schmithals, 1971; Sumney, 1990).

(1 Cor. 1.12; 3.4-6)⁶ nor of how the questioning of Paul's apostolic authority is related to Gentile initiation/baptism (1 Cor. 9.1-2; 15.3-11). The Pauline opponents at Philippi are certainly concerned with circumcision for they are the ones who 'mutilate the flesh' (Phil. 3.2) and are those who 'live as enemies of the cross of Christ' (Phil. 3.18). But here Paul's description is terse in the extreme and there is no indication of where these 'circumcisers' come from or even whether they are believers.⁷ This leaves the evidence of the *Letter to the Galatians*. This letter probably presents the most appropriate information, for it is the letter in which Paul recounts the dealings with the Jerusalem church around the time of the Jerusalem Conference and Antioch dispute. In relating these events to the Galatian believers, Paul must view the problems at Galatia as closely connected with, and relevant to, these earlier events.⁸

The 'false brothers' of (Gal. 2.4) are described as coming 'to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and enslave us' (Gal. 2.4).⁹ These ideas of freedom and slavery recur in the context of the Galatian problem (Gal. 5.1) where the troublemakers are advocating Law observance including 'special days, and months, and seasons, and years' (Gal. 4.10) and ultimately circumcision (Gal. 6.12). It seems probable, therefore, that Law observance and circumcision are the issues central to the teaching of the 'false brothers'. This deduction is supported by Paul's comment that Titus was not compelled to be circumcised (Gal. 2.3).¹⁰ Paul's use of the appellation, 'false brothers', is strongly suggestive that these were Jewish believers.¹¹ 'Brothers' could conceivably refer to fellow Jews who were not believers, but the addition of 'false' identifies them as Jewish

⁶ It is not baptism itself which is the issue but the allegiance to the baptizer.

⁷ So Holmberg, 1978, pp 48-49. Peterlin (1995, p 77) regards 'attempts at a precise and universally accepted definition of the opponents in Phil. 3 [to] have failed'. Bruce (1989, p 104) identifies them as Jewish Christians from the mother church in Jerusalem and so also does Lüdemann (1989b, p 106). Watson (1986, pp 74-77 and 2007, pp 136-150) identifies them specifically with the judaizers of Galatians. Marshall (1992, pp 79-80) suggests that they are Jewish missionaries advocating circumcision as in Galatia. In contrast, Hawthorne (1983, p 123) supposes them to be 'evangelistically orientated Jews' similar to those described in Mt. 23.15. There is considerable debate as to whether such active Jewish evangelisation took place. Carleton Paget (1996, pp 65-103) summarises the arguments for active proselytism (as for example Feldman) and against (as for example Goodman and MacKnight following the argument of Munck) and concludes that Jewish proselytism did occur but not necessarily in an aggressive sense; evangelisation may have been primarily to 'change the morals' (p 78) of the Gentiles and/or to be an 'educational, informative and apologetic mission' (p 101) centred mainly on the synagogue, possibly with the hope of a future full conversion including circumcision.

⁸ So Witherington, 1998a, p 136. Lüdemann proposes that the Galatian problem is 'a continuation of the Jerusalem dispute' (1989b, p 101).

⁹ Ψευδαλέλφοι are also named in 2 Cor. 11.26 which may indicate the same opponents in Corinth as in Antioch/Jerusalem.

¹⁰ So Dunn, 1993, p 95.

¹¹ So Dunn, 1993, p 97; Longenecker, 1990, p 51; Bruce, 1982, p 113.

believers; non-believing Jews could hardly be referred to as 'false' because they advocated Law observance. At Antioch Paul opposes Peter, 'before everyone' (*Gal.* 2.14) because of his change of behaviour in withdrawing from table fellowship with Gentile believers. Here again the issue is Law observance in the context of the food laws and/or of association with Gentiles for Paul says that Peter is 'compelling the Gentiles to judaize' (*Gal.* 2.14).

The 'troublemakers' of Galatia are referred to in five passages,¹² *Gal.* 1.6-9; 3.1-2, 5; 4.17; 6.12-14. Like the 'false brothers', the 'troublemakers' are, apparently, Jewish believers for they preach a 'gospel', even though that 'gospel' is in some way a different gospel from the one Paul preaches (*Gal.* 1.6). They are, themselves, circumcised (*Gal.* 6.13) and their preaching emphasizes Law observance. This Law observance may also be associated in some way with the gift of the Spirit (*Gal.* 3.5).¹³ They advocate circumcision for the Galatian Gentile believers (*Gal.* 6.12). There are indications that they originate from or, at least, have the approval of some in the mother church at Jerusalem and that their preaching constantly refers to the Jerusalem church.¹⁴ This would explain Paul's extended history of his own dealings with the Jerusalem church (*Gal.* 1.17-2.14) and also his contrived interpretation of the Sarah/Hagar saga which ends in the condemnation of the 'present Jerusalem' as existing in slavery.

Now this is an allegory: these women are two covenants. One woman, in fact, is Hagar, from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the other woman corresponds to the Jerusalem above; she is free, and she is our mother. (*Gal.* 4.24-26)

It seems, therefore, that both the 'false brothers' and the 'troublemakers' were evangelists advocating circumcision for Gentile believers, although not that they are necessarily the same people or group. They were Law observant, but their adherence to the Law did not cause them to eschew contact with these Gentile believers. On the contrary they seem to have gone to a considerable amount of trouble (in terms of travel

¹² Martyn, 1997, p 118.

¹³ So Martyn, 1997, pp 123-124.

¹⁴ Martyn, 1997, pp 126, 457-466; Jewett, 1971, p 204. Barclay, too, says that it seems likely that the agitators came from outside Galatia (1987, p 52) although does not go so far as to identify Jerusalem as their place of origin.

at least) to bring their ‘gospel’ to the Antiochene and Galatian community – if their home was Jerusalem. Their obvious desire for contact with the Gentile believers suggests that these Law-observant Jews did not regard the Gentiles as unclean pagans, but as fellow members of the early church to some extent (i.e. there was recognition of their repentance, baptism and reception of the Spirit). However, it is evident that the kind of membership which the Gentile believers enjoyed was deficient in the eyes of both the ‘false brothers’ and the ‘troublemakers’.¹⁵ Although Paul sees them as opponents and their ‘gospel’ as a threat to his church communities (*Gal.* 5.4) and a personal attack on himself (*Gal.* 6.17), it is equally likely that the ‘false brothers’ and the ‘troublemakers’ were acting out of concern for the Gentile believers rather than specifically attempting to spite Paul.¹⁶ Their desire – that these fellow members of the early church should be saved at the eschaton – prompted them to preach a gospel to them which included circumcision as the only assured sign of belonging within the covenant. In the context of the Moreland and Levine model for the passage of an individual through a group, the ‘troublemakers’ view baptism as a rite of *entry*, admitting the believing Gentiles as new members into the community of believers. However, this was not full membership, for full membership required the rite of *acceptance* into the covenant, which, for the judaizers, was circumcision. Some commentators have deduced that the teaching of the ‘troublemakers’ included this concept of circumcision completing the entry based on *Gal.* 3.3 as echoing the words of the ‘troublemakers’,

Having started with the Spirit, are you now ending (ἐπιτελείσθε) with the flesh?¹⁷

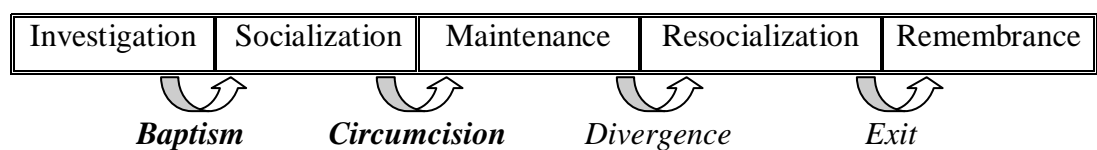
¹⁵ Based on the implied accusation contained in *Gal.* 1.10 and 5.11, Barclay (1987, p 59) suggests that the ‘troublemakers’ may have argued that Paul had left the believers ‘in Galatia with an inadequate initiation’ for they may have ‘described the Galatians’ baptism as the first part of proselyte initiation without its completion in circumcision’.

¹⁶ Howard (pp 1-19, 19) suggests that the ‘troublemakers’ in no way saw themselves as opposing Paul but finishing the work he had started. ‘The view presented here is that rather than assuming that the opponents held the opposite position from the one they ascribed to Paul, they held in fact the same position they ascribed to him and considered him as their ally’ (p 9). Similarly, Longenecker (1990, p 291), commenting on Paul’s accusation that these opponents were motivated by self-interest in avoiding persecution (*Gal.* 6.12), describes it as a ‘judgement call’ on Paul’s part and ‘highly subjective in nature’.

¹⁷ See footnote 15. Also Betz (1979, pp 133-134) suggests that perhaps the term ‘played a role for the opponents’ and that ‘in v 3 there could be a hint that Paul’s missionary efforts were taken as merely the first step, and that the opponents claimed to provide the necessary and final measures to bring salvation to completion and perfection’ (p 135). Longenecker (1990, p 106) suggests that the ‘Judaizers in Galatia, it seems, claimed not to be opposing Paul but to be supplementing his message’. Jewett (1971, pp 206-207) sees the ‘agitators’ as presenting circumcision as the final step on the road to perfection, prompted by the ‘Zealot threat to the Judean church’; the Galatians complied because of the attraction of the ideal of

Much the same picture emerges from *Acts*. The Jews, who went down from Judea to Antioch, told the Gentile believers, ‘Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved’ (*Acts* 15.1). Later Luke reports that similar sentiments were expressed by people who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees (*Acts* 15.5). Again it is evident that, although Law-observant themselves, Luke depicts these men as not showing any hesitation in contacting the Antiochene Gentiles. Their motive in journeying to Antioch, according to Luke, is concern for the salvation of the Gentile believers (*Acts* 15.1). The baptism that the Gentile believers have already received is insufficient, in the eyes of the Law-observant Jews, to ensure their salvation. It is likely that the Law-observant Jewish believers regarded the Gentile believers in much the same way that orthodox Jews regarded those Gentile ‘sympathizers’ who adhered to the synagogues to some degree.¹⁸ They were generally accepted as members of the community but were inferior members.

It is easy to see that, in terms of the Moreland and Levine model, the opponents of Paul would view the baptism of the Gentile believers as corresponding to the *entry* rite which established the recipient as a new member, but not yet a full member, of the community. Further socialization was required which would ultimately result in the *acceptance* rite of circumcision. The Moreland and Levine model would look like this for the opponents of Paul:



perfection previously acquired in the mystery religions and classical Greek philosophy. Borgen (1982, p 39) finds similarity with the writings of Philo (quoting especially *On the Migration of Abraham* 92) on ethical and actual circumcision and concludes that the ‘idea that the observance of circumcision should follow and complete the ethical circumcision is supported by *Gal.* 3.3’. Fredriksen (1991, pp 558-562) presents an interesting but speculative suggestion that the impetus for circumcision resulted from the delay in the coming of the parousia; an eschatological understanding of the admission of uncircumcised Gentiles to Israel gave way to a drive for circumcision to normalize an irregular position as the eschaton failed to materialize – a failure possibly attributed to the lack of success in the Jewish mission as more uncircumcised Gentiles entered the community of believers.

¹⁸ See 3.3.3, pp 121ff.

4.2.2 Paul's Understanding of Baptism

Paul's own understanding of baptism and circumcision is radically different from that of his opponents.¹⁹ At no time does he accept that circumcision is necessary for Gentile believers. For the Gentiles, at least, circumcision is irrelevant as is evident from the following quotations.

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; the only thing that counts is faith working through love. (*Gal. 5.6*)

For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. (*Gal. 6.15*)

Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but obeying the commandments of God is everything. (*1 Cor. 7.18-19*)

Paul even seems to claim that circumcision is not just a matter of indifference but would be detrimental to the Gentile believers.

Listen! I, Paul, am telling you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you. Once again I testify to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obliged to obey the entire law. You who want to be justified by the Law have cut yourselves off from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. (*Gal. 5.2-4*)

Paul appears to follow a more metaphorical interpretation of circumcision – that it is not the outward sign of circumcision that is relevant but the inward attitude which matches the outward sign.²⁰

¹⁹ In what follows I shall use the evidence from the authentically Pauline letters. It may be argued that Paul's stance on baptism may have changed in the period between the Jerusalem Conference and his writing some of the later letters, so that using letters such as Corinthians and Romans becomes invalid. However, it is evident from chapter 2 of *Galatians* that Paul held a very definite opinion that Gentiles should not be subject to certain Jewish Laws from the time of the Jerusalem Conference and Antioch dispute.

²⁰ Philo seems to take a similar approach in *The Special Laws* I.8. 'First of all, it is a symbol of the excision of the pleasures which delude the mind; for since, of all the delights which pleasure can afford, the association of man with woman is the most exquisite'. However, Philo advocates physical circumcision in addition to its symbolic effects (*On the Migration of Abraham* 89 – 'For there are some men, who, looking upon written laws as symbols of things appreciable by the intellect, have studied some things with superfluous accuracy, and have treated others with neglectful indifference; whom I should blame for their levity; for they ought to attend to both classes of things, applying themselves both to an accurate investigation of invisible things, and also to an

Circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law; but if you break the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. So, if those who are uncircumcised keep the requirements of the law, will not their uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? ... For a person is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. Rather, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart. (*Rom.* 2.25-29)

In this metaphorical way he can claim that it is the believers in Christ who are the true circumcision not those who exhibit outward circumcision.

For it is we who are the circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus (*Phil.* 3.3).

Thus circumcision has no place in the initiation for the Gentile believers for Paul. Baptism into Christ has done away with the older distinctions of Jew and Greek (*Gal.* 3.28) and circumcised and uncircumcised (*Gal.* 5.6; 6.15; *1 Cor.* 7.19).²¹

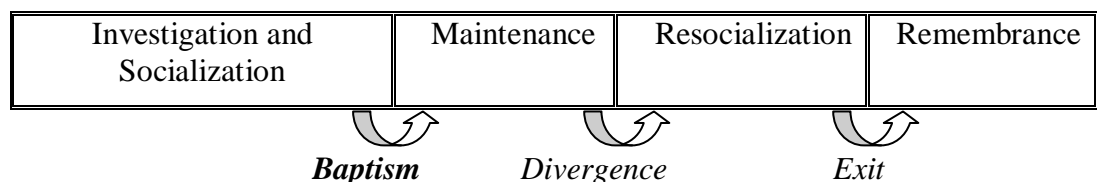
If circumcision plays no part in the initiation of new members into the early church, what is the role of baptism in Paul's thinking? Paul associates the rite of baptism closely with baptism of the Spirit. He predominantly uses the passive form of the verb, baptize (as *1 Cor.* 1.13, 15; 12.13; 15.29; *Rom.* 6.3), probably to emphasize the overriding role of divine rather than human action. Thus it is baptism in the Spirit which is important for Paul. It is by faith that the Spirit is received (*Gal.* 3.2) and through the one who gives the Spirit that powerful works are performed in the believer (*Gal.* 3.5). Yet baptism with water by the community does take place in the Pauline churches as is evident in *1 Cor.* 1.14-16. Baptism in the Spirit means baptism into the body of Christ (*1 Cor.* 12.13) and baptism into his death (*Rom.* 6.3). Baptism into his death gives to all the promise of eternal salvation and death to sin (*Rom.* 6.3-5, 23; 8.2; *Phil.* 3.10-11). But, in the present time, it is baptism into the body of Christ that gives all believers the gifts necessary to serve the community (*Rom.* 12.4-8; *1 Cor.* 12.12-31). Thus, being members of the body of Christ enables the gifts of apostleship, prophecy, ministry, healing,

irreproachable observance of those laws which are notorious'). Unlike Paul he is not advocating the neglect of the rite but attempting an explanation of the interpretation of the physical act. Barclay (1998, p 543) concludes that a 'universalizing allegory was acceptable for him [Philo] only insofar as it supported the particularities of the law, not if it threatened to undermine them'.

²¹ Horsley (1998, p 171) comes to the same conclusion in commenting on *1 Cor.* 12.13 so that 'not only Jews, but also Gentiles "in Christ", are now heirs of the promise to Abraham'.

teaching, encouragement/consolation, administration and even leadership (*Rom.* 12.3-9).²² Yet none of these gifts is to be regarded as superior to the others (*1 Cor.* 12.14-25). Thus, the baptism in the Spirit confers full capacity on the Gentile believer to exercise all the possible roles which members may perform within the group. In terms of the Moreland and Levine model of group socialization, this capacity to undertake roles within the group up to, and including, leadership is a sign of full membership of the group.²³ In the writings of Paul, baptism, therefore, represents entry into the full membership of the group; it is the rite of *acceptance* not (or not only) *entry*. The concept of circumcision as a second rite of initiation is impossible. Baptism into Christ has already made the Gentile believers into Abraham's seed and hence heirs to the promise made to Abraham (*Gal.* 3.29).

It is obvious that the understanding of Paul and his churches is very different from that of his opponents. Baptism is the initiation rite into full membership of the early church. All the benefits and status of full membership are available to baptized members. They can exercise roles of leadership, authority and power within the group. The Moreland and Levine model would look like this for Paul and his supporters at Antioch.



4.3 The Minority Influence of the Antiochene Gentiles and Pauline Faction

There is evidence from Josephus that the number of Gentiles who were attracted to Judaism was high in the city of Antioch. Although Josephus may have exaggerated numbers, he relates that, at Antioch,

²² Προϊστάμενος is used also as a form of manager/leader in *1 Titus* 3.4, 12; *1 Thess.* 5.12. Dunn (1988, p 73) notes that it can also be used in a sense of 'be concerned for' or 'give aid' to. If this is the sense, then a benefactor might be implied and Dunn favours this translation, suggesting it refers to a 'protector' of substantial wealth and/or social status. Barrett (1962, p 239) concludes 'it does not describe any office with precision; it rather refers to a function which may have been exercised by several persons, perhaps jointly or in turn'.

²³ Moreland and Levine (1982, pp 167-170) 'The group tries to define a special role for each full member that maximises his or her contributions to group goal attainment'.

they [Jews] were constantly attracting to their religious ceremonies multitudes of Greeks, and these they had in some measure incorporated into themselves. (*Jewish War* 7.45)

Acts gives a similar impression of large numbers of Gentiles converting to the Antiochene church (*Acts* 11.21). Again Luke may be exaggerating for his own purposes but a significant influx of Gentile believers can also be inferred from the facts that the some Jewish believers in Jerusalem seemed eager to investigate the Antiochene church (*Acts* 15.1) and the situation at Antioch was important enough to warrant the general meeting of the church at Jerusalem (*Acts* 15.2; *Gal.* 2.1-10). The influx of a group of Gentile believers, rather than separate individuals, means that the Gentile believers formed a distinct subgroup of the community at Antioch. Luke, in *Acts* (15.23) seems to endorse this understanding of the Gentile believers as distinct subgroups within the early churches for the opening greeting prior to the Apostolic Decree addresses them directly.

The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to *the believers of Gentile origin* in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings.

As distinct subgroups within the churches Gentile believers were in a position to exert considerably more influence than would be expected from new members of a group.

In Chapter 2.4.2 (pp 60ff) the effects of minorities in groups were discussed. The effectiveness of a minority grouping seems to be dependent on a number of factors. Firstly, they need to provide a consistent and sustained point of view over a period of time. Secondly, they need to be perceived by the majority remaining members of the group as being authentic members of the in-group in that they uphold the essential and basic norms of the group; where their opinions and beliefs differ from the majority must be in areas which are conceded as peripheral. Thirdly, the attitude of the majority itself is important, for it must also be moving slowly towards the position expressed by the minority or, at least, be disposed to accept original and creative movement; in this way the influence of a Gentile minority would be likely to be greater in the Diaspora than in the more orthodox setting of Jerusalem. Finally, the influence of a minority will be proportional to the number of members of the minority subgroup; as the number increases so will the minority influence. In addition, if the minority includes some

members who are regarded as valuable to the group, such as those who already occupy a moderate to high status in the wider society, this will also promote minority influence.

In *Galatians* there is evidence that the incorporation of Gentile believers in the early church community at Antioch precipitated change within that church which deviated from the behaviour expected by more law-abiding Jewish believers. Paul's terse aside concerning the 'false brothers' who spied on the freedom of Paul and his associates wanting to enslave them (*Gal.* 2.4) suggests a movement away from the expected behavior of Jewish believers into a freer type of conduct unfettered by 'slavish', Law-observant, conduct. Similarly the episode at Antioch demonstrates that, without the influence of the 'people from James' the Antiochene Jews were prepared to enter into a form of table fellowship which was unacceptable to the 'people from James' when they arrived from Jerusalem (*Gal.* 2.11-13). It seems reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the admittance of Gentiles into the believing community at Antioch did lead to changes in behaviour, beliefs and opinions on certain issues such as table fellowship, corresponding to the social psychology model of minority influence. From the limited evidence available, the circumstances and behavioral styles at Antioch appear to conform to those described by socio-psychological models for minority influence leading to change within a group.

Consistency is a prime factor in facilitating minority influence. Although there is no evidence of the consistency of the Gentile minority/Pauline faction at Antioch, there is abundant evidence for the constancy of Paul, himself, in his belief in a law-free gospel for Gentile believers. Paul argued for the law-free gospel at the Jerusalem Conference (*Gal.* 2.1-10); he confronted Peter before everyone when Peter withdrew from eating with the Gentile believers at Antioch (*Gal.* 2.14-16); he argued with the Galatians to resist the approaches made by those who are advocating circumcision (*Gal.* 5.2-3) and to rely on faith and the Spirit rather than 'works of the law' (*Gal.* 3.2; also 3.24-28); in Philippi, too, he advocated resisting the 'dogs' who want to mutilate the flesh (*Phil.* 3.2). Paul consistently opposed those who advocated ritual Law observance for Gentile believers.

Very important, too, is the perception of the minority as being 'one of us' and not an out-group. The Gentile believers at Antioch were part of the community. They were baptized, received the Spirit and took part in the liturgies and so, in most respects,

were members of the in-group. Over a period of time the Gentile believers increased in number (*Acts* 11.19-21) so the size of the minority group was growing. They were acquainted with the Jewish believers at Antioch in face-to-face situations. In addition, the Gentile believers are likely to have relinquished some friends, family and position to become believers; their choice for monotheism could mean forgoing many public, civic and private occasions of celebration and ceremony due to the close association at these times in both the public and private spheres with pagan sacrifice to the gods.²⁴ Thus the Gentile believers are likely to have been perceived as having suffered injury or loss of some kind for the sake of their conversion to the early church community with its associated commitment to monotheism. They were upholding the essential norm of monotheism and, as the Antiochene church would follow Paul's understanding of Gentile baptism, they were perceived as full members of the group. These are the circumstances which would have resulted in the Jewish contingent at Antioch respecting and attributing certainty and validity to any new or unorthodox position adopted by the Gentile subgroup (probably under the leadership of Paul) such as uncircumcision and generally less adherence to the Torah.

The Jewish believers at Antioch, themselves, may have been disposed to the idea of change so assisting their complying with minority influence. Zetterholm has analyzed the situation of Jews in the Diaspora, particularly at Antioch.²⁵ Following Kraabel,²⁶ he argues that the shift from their majority situation in Palestine to minority status in the Diaspora promoted changes in value systems.²⁷ Migration, and accommodation to a more pluralistic environment, can affect religious beliefs and practices in a variety of ways. Religious beliefs can be weakened by the migration or

²⁴ Clarke (2000, pp 19-25) concludes that in both Rome and the Greek city-states 'the ancient world conceived of no clear separation between the secular and religious spheres' (p 19) and that 'integral to the ethos of local civic politics was a belief in the important patronage of the civic deities' (p 25). Religious and political buildings were erected side by side and 'official business was conducted within a clearly religious context which reflected the underlying beliefs and superstitions of the majority of its citizens' (p 25). Gooch (1993, pp 15-26) argues that many temples to the various deities had public rooms used for social gatherings which may not have been associated specifically with temple sacrifice but would have 'stood in an ambiguous relationship' to the cult and so presented some difficulties for converts to monotheism. In addition, Gooch (1993, pp 27-38) also concludes that many celebratory meals in private homes 'included food that had been sacrificed to the gods before the meal or as part of the events of the meal' (p 37). Popkes, too, concludes that the close association of civic and religious dimensions of life made it difficult for Jews or Christians to hold any sort of public office (2005, p 330). While Tellbe argues that there was no legal requirement to take part in pagan cults he does concede that non-participation would be 'easily regarded by others as socially deviant or politically subversive' (2001, p 47).

²⁵ Zetterholm, 2003, pp 53-111.

²⁶ Kraabel, 1992a, pp 21-31.

²⁷ Zetterholm, 2003, pp 56-57.

strengthened by it; they can also be changed drastically as, for example, by the formation of sects or by innovatively attempting to amalgamate previously held religious beliefs in the context of the new environment.²⁸ Zetterholm designated these three alternatives ‘*traditionalistic, secular and innovative tendencies*’.²⁹ He illustrates the occurrence of all three alternatives at Antioch. The *secular* adaptation is exemplified by Antiochus the apostate who ‘denounced his own father and the other Jews, accusing them of a design to burn the whole city’ (*Jewish War* 7.46-47). Zetterholm describes Antiochus as one who had ‘completely broken with his tradition and in all essentials become a Greek’.³⁰ The traditionalistic alternative is less well attested by Zetterholm.³¹ However, he illustrates it by the example of those who were prepared to die rather than sacrifice ‘after the manner of the Greeks’ (*Jewish War* 7.50-51), and suggests that the proposed location for the writing of 4 Maccabees as Antioch indicates some

torah ideology in Antioch that could be connected to a Jewish group who considered that obedience to the torah was worth dying for.³²

Most interesting, however, is Zetterholm’s identification of the *innovative* alternative with the messianic Jesus movement.³³ He argues that, although the messianic Jesus movement originated in Palestine, the distinctive feature of including Gentile believers originated at Antioch at the instigation of Hellenists (*Acts* 11.20).³⁴ This inclusion of Gentiles, together with its apocalyptic message, indicates that the messianic Jesus movement was ‘a new, innovative form of religious movement’, illustrating the adaptation to the new pluralistic environment and representing a different way of being Jewish.³⁵ If Zetterholm is correct in his interpretation, then the messianic Jesus movement would be exactly the sort of group that would be amenable to innovative and

²⁸ So also Hamberg, 1999.

²⁹ Zetterholm, 2003, p 60.

³⁰ Zetterholm, 2003, p 76.

³¹ Zetterholm, 2003, pp 80-88.

³² Zetterholm, 2003, p 82.

³³ Zetterholm, 2003, pp 88-91.

³⁴ Although there is dispute about the historicity of *Acts*, Zetterholm contends that the naming of Antioch as the origin of the Gentile mission and the nomination of Hellenists as the instigators of the mission have no narrative significance for Luke and so are likely to be historically based (2003, p 89) (see also pp 21ff).

³⁵ Zetterholm, 2003, p 89.

creative change and would be moving towards assimilation, in some ways, with their new pluralistic and Hellenistic milieu.³⁶

This examination of the behavioural styles and situation of the Gentile believers (and associated Pauline faction) is compatible with some of the requirements of the socio-psychological model for the influence of a minority group on the majority. The Gentile believers would have been influencing and changing the whole group of believers at Antioch. However, the conditions which would promote the influence of the Gentiles at Antioch would not apply to the community of the Jerusalem church. They may have been aware of the Gentile believers as a minority subgroup within the early church but they were not a subgroup of the Jerusalem community. These believers were not in face-to-face contact with Gentile believers and not subjected to their consistent views. The Jerusalem believers were probably unaware of the sacrifices made by the Gentiles in converting to the early church communities. They, themselves, were still living in Palestine and so not subjected to the pluralistic milieu of the Diaspora. The *Zeitgeist* in Jerusalem was likely to be unfavourable to innovative and creative change. Quite the contrary, the Roman occupation precipitated a stricter attitude to Judaism and Law observance.³⁷ Thus whatever influence the minority group of believing Gentiles exerted on the church community at Antioch, it is improbable that any similar influence was experienced within the Jerusalem church community.

The Gentile believers, along with some Jewish believers, could have exerted influence within the Antiochene church community. But influence of one subgroup on another entails discussion, and discussion takes place, not between complete groups, but between representatives or spokesman of the various groups.³⁸ Thus minority opinion is often vocalized through representatives, but these representatives are also leaders of the group, whether or not they are officially designated as such.

4.4 The Emergence of Leadership among Gentile Believers

In Chapter 2 (section 2.5 pp 63ff) I attempted to outline the socio-psychological understanding of leadership and its emergence in groups, the possible models of

³⁶ Maass and Clark, 1984, p 432; Moscovici and Lage, 1978, pp 349-365; Paicheler, 1976, pp 405-427.

³⁷ Theissen and Schütz, 1982, pp 27-34.

³⁸ Hogg and Vaughan, 2002, p 429.

leadership in the Graeco-Roman world of the first century and the models of leadership in the early church. Apart from the ‘great man’ theory which is dependent both on charismatic leader and apposite timing, the main factors in emergent leadership seem to be prototypicality with group norms and the sort of social characteristics which arouse leadership schemata in followers and cause them to attribute leadership traits to status-advantaged members of the group. In the Graeco-Roman world similar schemata appear to have operated. Looking at the household, the voluntary associations and the Jewish synagogues, status, family and honour were all important. The *paterfamilias*, with his status and authority within the household and wider community, was the basic leader within the community and exerted power and influence. In the early church, too, status in the family and in the wider community seemed to be factors in determining who exercised leadership, although charismatic leadership was also possible.

The particular situation in the early church at Antioch seems to provide the conditions necessary for the emergence of a Gentile minority which could exert influence within the whole Antiochene community. The number of uncircumcised Gentile believers made it likely that a minority subgroup would materialize. If, as I have argued earlier (3.4.1 pp 126ff), some of the Gentile believers were status-advantaged, then they would naturally emerge as leaders of this subgroup. They possessed the status characteristics which evoked schemata of leadership in status-disadvantaged followers. Even status-advantaged people whose expertise is not necessarily relevant (diffuse status-advantaged, see p 69) to the tasks of the group can be attributed the qualities (schemata) of leadership required by status-disadvantaged members of the group.

In the previous chapter (3.3.2 and 3.4.1) I argued that some Gentile believers were status-advantaged in terms of family and prestige in the wider community. They originated from the ranks of the ‘sympathizers’ to Judaism and there is evidence that some of these ‘sympathizers’ had sufficient wealth and prestige to act as patrons to the Jewish synagogues. It seems reasonable to assume that a representative cross-section of the ‘sympathizers’ converted to the early church communities. Indeed some of the status-advantaged Gentile ‘sympathizers’ may have been more, rather than less, likely to convert if their status within Judaism caused them to experience some status dissonance as a result of their exclusion from certain aspects of Judaism because of their

uncircumcision. Such people would be prime candidates for leadership within the communities of the early church.

While Paul and Barnabas undoubtedly occupied key roles of leadership at Antioch, it is likely that other leaders would emerge from the ranks of the uncircumcised Gentile believers as leaders of this particular subgroup. As Social Identity Theory and Self-Categorization Theory have demonstrated, in the context where group identity is salient, prototypicality is a major requirement for leadership (see 2.5.2 pp 66ff). When the numbers of uncircumcised believers at Antioch increased such that they became a significant minority subgroup, the tendency of the subgroup would be to want leaders who were prototypical of that subgroup (i.e. uncircumcised). In the discussions with the circumcised Jewish believers their representatives should exhibit the salient norms of the subgroup (i.e. non-Torah observance). While Paul and Barnabas could sympathize with, champion and support these norms within the Antiochene community, they could not be prototypical of the uncircumcised subgroup. This subgroup required uncircumcised leaders, for the issues of circumcision and Torah observance were crucial as can be deduced from the discussions of the Jerusalem Conference (*Gal.* 2.3-9) and the subsequent Antioch dispute (*Gal.* 2.11-15). As the issue of Torah observance became more central, there is a strong probability that uncircumcised Gentile believers would come forward as leaders of the believing Gentile community within the Antiochene church.

The need for prototypical leadership allows those status-advantaged Gentile believers to emerge as leaders and assume the role to which their previous experience and/or familial heritage had predisposed them. Their status characteristics – family background, education, position in the wider society – also cause those status-disadvantaged members of the Gentile subgroup to attribute leadership traits to them. The status-advantaged Gentiles were ready to assume leadership and the status-disadvantaged Gentiles were ready to follow. In addition, some of the Gentile believers may have been in a position to acquire ‘charismatic’ leadership of the form that Holmberg describes;³⁹ those who demonstrated that they had received the gift of the Spirit by outbursts of glossolalia would be suitable candidates. The first Gentiles to receive baptism – the ‘first fruits’ – would also be in a special situation. We know that

³⁹ Holmberg, 1978, p 159.

sometimes more than one of these facilitating factors could coincide in a single person. Thus in Corinth, Stephanas, who receives Paul's commendation as someone who is due recognition from the church (*1 Cor.* 16.18), has the special position of being a 'first fruit' (*1 Cor.* 16.15-17) and was also status-advantaged as a *paterfamilias*.

4.5 The Example of Titus

So far in this chapter, I have presented circumstantial evidence that the time was ripe at Antioch for the emergence of Gentile leaders. As the number of Gentile believers increased, they would form a minority subgroup within the Antiochene church based on their lack of circumcision (i.e. their difference from Jewish believers). As a minority they would naturally favour some members as their representatives or leaders. Paul and Barnabas fulfilled this role to some extent but there would be a need for more prototypical leadership (i.e. uncircumcised), probably as subordinates to Paul and Barnabas. Within the subgroup of the Gentile believers any status-advantaged members, who had occupied positions of honour and prestige within the wider community, were likely to be attributed leadership characteristics by the rest of the Gentile believers. But is there any evidence that Gentile leadership was emerging in the church at Antioch?

There is very little detail concerning the Antiochene church community. *Acts* (13.1) gives a list of leaders but these are all Jewish (or in the case of Nicholas a full convert to Judaism). Paul mentions himself and Barnabas (*Gal.* 2.1 and 9) but also includes Titus whom he took with him to Jerusalem (*Gal.* 2.1). It is Titus who seems to be an example of an emerging Gentile leader. Scholars have posited various reasons for the presence of Titus at Jerusalem.⁴⁰ Most seem to agree that Titus was some kind of test case, but exactly what sort of test case is not evident. Longenecker and Dunn both suggest that Titus was a test case but neither expand further other than also to conjecture that Titus was also Paul's assistant or helper.⁴¹ Esler sees Paul's act in taking Titus with him as a challenge:

⁴⁰ For example, Betz, 1979, p 88; Longenecker, 1990, p 47; Dunn, 1993, pp 90-91; Holmberg, 1978, p 23; Esler, 1998, p 130; Martyn, 1997, p 190; Bruce, 1982, p 111.

⁴¹ Longenecker, 1990, p 47; Dunn, 1993, pp 90-91.

he was, in a literal sense, entering their social space ... Titus' uncircumcised presence was a grievous insult to all those who thought only members of the House of Israel could belong to the new movement.⁴²

It is difficult to reconcile Esler's explanation with the presumption that Gentile believers had been associated with Diaspora communities and the Antiochene church for some time. If *Acts* 11.22-24 has any historical basis, then the Jerusalem church was aware of the presence of Gentile believers in the Diaspora and put forward no objection.⁴³ Likewise Paul claims to have met both Cephas and James, the Lord's brother, fourteen years prior to the Jerusalem Conference (*Gal.* 1.18, 19; 2.1) at which time it seems unlikely that his mission to the Gentiles was not discussed. Thus the acceptance of Gentile believers as members of the 'new movement', at least in the more remote Diaspora communities, had already taken place. The suggestion that Martyn puts forward seems more probable – that Paul's 'gospel was made present by a piece of its fruit, Titus'.⁴⁴ Watson agrees that Titus was a presumably impressive 'product of Antiochene missionary expansion'.⁴⁵

Yet, Paul's language does not suggest that Titus was simply a representative Gentile believer, who, if accepted by the Jerusalem community, demonstrated that all Gentile believers were similarly acceptable. In connection with Titus's circumcision, Paul declares that 'not even [ὅλλ' οὐδέ] Titus was compelled to be circumcised' This ὅλλ' οὐδέ is a strong comparison for Paul.⁴⁶ He uses it in two other places in his letters.

1. And so, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not [ὅλλ' οὐδέ ἔτι νῦν] ready. (*1 Cor.* 3.1-2)

⁴² Esler, 1998, p 130.

⁴³ Paul also gives reason to conclude that the Jerusalem church was in contact with the community at Antioch. Both Peter and the 'people from James' visit the community after the Jerusalem Conference (*Gal.* 2.11-1) and, if the episode with the 'false brothers' were from Jerusalem and took place at Antioch (*Gal.* 2.4), they visited before the Jerusalem Conference.

⁴⁴ Martyn, 1997, p 190; also Watson (2007, p 103) describes Titus as 'presumably impressive ... product of Antiochene missionary expansion'.

⁴⁵ Watson, 2007, p 103.

⁴⁶ So also Martyn, 1997, p 193; Bruce, 1982, p 111.

2. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. I do not even [ἀλλ' οὐδέ] judge myself. (*1 Cor.* 4.3)

Both these examples of ἀλλ' οὐδέ show the highly significant nature of the comparison that Paul is drawing. It is not a simple comparison between relative equals; it is a comparison which contains the elements of overstatement and shock because of the unequal circumstances which are being compared and their consequences. In the case of the Corinthians it is a comparison of their very early associations as 'infants in Christ' with their current, more mature, status, the shock being that even after all this time they are still not ready. In the reference to himself, Paul compares the triviality of being judged by others with the more stringent criticism with which he judged himself. If he does not even judge himself, it is ridiculous to suggest that he is concerned over the judgment of other people. Likewise with Titus, if not even Titus was compelled to be circumcised then it is ridiculous to consider that the ordinary Gentile believers in Galatia should need to be circumcised.⁴⁷ The implication is that the comparison is not a comparison of equals. Titus was not just an ordinary Gentile believer; he was more than that.

There is evidence within the New Testament for Titus as an emerging leader within the Gentile community.⁴⁸ Firstly, there is the evidence that, within just a few years,⁴⁹ Titus became one of the itinerant leaders, with the important job of reconciling the Corinthians to Paul following the crisis in their relations (*2 Cor.* 7.6-14).⁵⁰ He was then entrusted with overseeing the collection for Jerusalem from the Gentile churches (*2 Cor.* 8.6 and 16; 12.18).⁵¹ Both Barrett and Holmberg have noted that, by the time of

⁴⁷ Dunn (1993, p 95) notes the force of the 'not even' but interprets it as 'Titus was so obviously a Greek and not a Jew; if Paul could successfully defend his position in relation to Titus he could sustain it for all Greeks.' Dunn does not expound on exactly what made Titus 'so obviously a Greek'. Bruce takes another view when he says 'The reference to Titus reminds Paul of something to which, perhaps, no importance was attached at the time but which provided a helpful precedent in the light of later events' (1982, p 111).

⁴⁸ The second century *Acts of Paul* also has several references to Titus, along with Luke, in connection with the martyrdom of Paul in Rome and the baptism of Longus and Cestus at his grave (Hennecke, 1963, pp 346, 383, 386)

⁴⁹ Barrett (1969, p 3) estimates about 5 years.

⁵⁰ Conzelmann, 1973, pp 160-161; Kee, 1962, p 656; Barrett, 1969, pp 9-10. Itinerant leadership as a subordinate of an apostle is one of the prominent leadership roles in the early church, rating above the local leadership according to Holmberg (1978, pp 196-197). See 1.2.2.2 pp 12ff.

⁵¹ Conzelmann, 1973, pp 160-161; Kee, 1962, p 656; Betz, 1979, p 84; Barrett, 1969, pp 10-12. There is also evidence in *2 Timothy* that Titus worked in Dalmatia (*2 Tim.* 4.10). Although *2 Timothy* is generally not regarded as authentically Pauline, some scholars acknowledge that the end of the Letter containing personal details may be a fragment of some unknown but genuine Pauline correspondence (Kee, 1962, p 657).

writing *2 Corinthians*, Titus is described as a partner and co-worker (*2 Cor.* 8. 23). This is evident from Paul's language in referring to Titus. Paul urged (παρακαλέω) Titus to go to the Corinthians while the unnamed brother is sent (συναποστέλλω) with him.⁵² Paul shows considerable affection and respect for Titus (*2 Cor.* 2.13; 7.6, 13, 14) and is also concerned that his (Paul's) previous boasting on account of the Corinthians' generosity will not be a cause of his shame before Titus (*2 Cor.* 7.14). Titus's opinion appears to be important to Paul. The second generation Christians certainly recognized Titus as a significant leader of the Gentile churches – significant enough to be the purported recipient of a personal letter from Paul (*Titus* 1.4). Furthermore, for Paul to mention Titus in his *Letter to the Galatians* is strong evidence that Titus was already known to the Galatians at the time Paul wrote this letter.⁵³ Paul's initial naming of Titus (*Gal.* 2.1) contains no introduction or description of him, and the description which Paul does give later – that Titus was a Greek (*Gal.* 2.3) – is given in the context of circumcision not of introduction. Thus, within just a few years, Titus had developed into an itinerant missionary leader of the church, subordinate only to the apostle, Paul. Secondly, *Acts* gives information that several delegates accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their journey to Jerusalem (*Acts* 15.2). Titus, although not mentioned in *Acts*, must have been such a delegate and, as a delegate, was also likely to have been already prominent in the Antiochene community, representing the interests of the Gentile subgroup of that community.⁵⁴

We know little of Titus before he became an itinerant missionary. His conciliatory activities in Corinth on Paul's behalf and his supervision of the collection strongly suggest that he was diplomatic and had good relationships with his fellow believers.⁵⁵ Such qualities imply confidence and linguistic skills in order to negotiate with people; qualities which, according to Bourdieu, signify cultural and social capital (see p 71). Furthermore, he seems to have had the ability to travel – there are references to him in Corinth (*2 Cor.* 12.16), Dalmatia (*2 Tim.* 4.10), Troas (*2 Cor.* 2.12-13) and Macedonia (*2 Cor.* 7.5-6). It seems unlikely that Titus was financed by the early church

⁵² Barrett, 1969, p 12. So also Holmberg, 1978, p 61 who suggests that Titus was in a 'more independent position' than Timothy on the basis of the wording in *2 Cor.* 8.16, 17; 12.18.

⁵³ So also Longenecker (1990, p 46) and Dunn (1993, p 90).

⁵⁴ Betz, 1979, p 84; Watson, 2007, p 103; Barrett also concludes that Titus 'may have been one of the deputation appointed (according to *Acts* 15.2) by the church at Antioch – possibly the Gentile member of it' (1969, p 4).

⁵⁵ Conzelmann (1973, p 160) concludes that "Titus must have been especially gifted in dealing with people".

for Paul is offended by the suggestion that he [Paul] profited from the money collected among the Corinthians, nor did he take advantage of the Corinthians through any of those he sent to Corinth including Titus (2 *Cor.* 12.16-18). Probably, therefore, Titus, too, traveled at his own expense. Such ability assumes that he had the capacity to travel, either by supporting himself as Paul seems to have done (*Acts* 18.3; *1 Cor.* 9.6), by working as a trader/merchant which involved travel as part of his occupation, or by having some personal or family wealth. These attributes of wealth and linguistic skills suggest that Titus may be classified as status-advantaged and, as such, fit some of the schemata for leadership described in Chapter 2.5.3 (see pp 68ff).

4.6 Conclusion

The present chapter has been an investigation into the status of the Gentile believers within the early church communities, particularly at Antioch. The socio-psychological model of group socialization, which describes the movement of new members through a group, has been used to elucidate the position of the Gentiles within the Antiochene church community. In particular, it has been used to investigate the rite(s) of initiation appropriate to membership within the early church. Moreland and Levine describe two possible rites – the rite of *entry* (which ritualizes the entry of an interested enquirer into the group as a new member) and the rite of *acceptance* (which ritualizes the transition from new member to acceptance into full membership). In the New Testament, two possible rites of initiation are apparent – baptism and circumcision. The evidence of *Acts* and, to a lesser extent of *Galatians*, suggests that the Gentile believers at Antioch were already baptized into Christ before the Jerusalem Conference took place. They were, in some way already members of the early church community. However, I have argued in this chapter that there was a substantial difference in the understanding of baptism as a rite of initiation between Paul and his more Torah-meticulous Jewish opponents. For Paul, baptism represented initiation into full membership of the early church; baptized members were eligible to occupy specific roles, including leadership within the community. However, the Jewish believers who opposed him saw baptism as a rite of entry of new members which required circumcision to complete the membership and establish the Gentile believers as full members of the community (and of the covenant of Israel). It is the conclusion of the chapter that this misunderstanding of baptism as an initiation rite was the source of the opposition Paul experienced from the more Torah-

meticulous Jewish believers. Paul and his opponents held different views as to the status of the Gentile believers within the early church.

One outcome of this difference in understanding of the baptism of the Gentile believers would be ambiguity over their status within the community subsequent to their baptism. As *new* members the Gentile believers would be discouraged from any attempts to exercise specific roles within the group or to exercise influence over the decisions of the group, whereas, as *full* members such attempts would be encouraged and expected by the community. The church at Antioch regarded baptism as the initiation rite into full membership so that the Gentile believers were eligible for leadership roles.

As some of the Gentile believers seem to have been people of moderate to high status within the wider community, schemata of leadership would be attributed to them by more socially disadvantaged individuals; they would naturally assume the authority of leadership. In addition, the influx of numbers of Gentiles would predispose the Gentile believers to form a subgroup of the Antiochene church and leaders would emerge that were prototypical of that subgroup. Further, the situation of Jews in the Diaspora was such as to render the Jewish believers more amenable to change than those in the centre of Judaism in Jerusalem. Thus circumstances at Antioch favoured the emergence of Gentile leadership of the Gentile minority which could exert influence within the whole Antiochene community.

On the evidence of *Galatians*, Titus seems to be such an emerging leader. His subsequent development as a valued itinerant missionary leader only a few years after the Jerusalem Conference and Antioch dispute suggests that he was beginning to fill a leadership role during his residence at Antioch. His presence at Jerusalem for the Conference, along with Barnabas and Paul, implies that he was there to represent the interests of the uncircumcised believers.

It does not seem unreasonable, therefore, to infer that the Gentile believers at Antioch were beginning to exercise influence in the early church community, perhaps even starting to wield power and authority as leaders of a subgroup within the larger Antiochene church community. According to the Moreland and Levine model of group development, the acquisition of roles, particular leadership roles, within a group occurs

during the maintenance phase, when the newcomer has been socialized and accepted by the group as a full member.⁵⁶ The emergence of leadership from the Gentile subgroup would emphasize the equality of membership of Jewish and Gentile believers very forcibly. The impact of this development in the early church, and the reaction of the more Torah-meticulous Jewish believers to the development, may have been contributing factors to the debates which resulted in the calling of the Jerusalem Conference.

⁵⁶ Moreland and Levine, 1982, pp 137-192

The Jerusalem Conference According to Paul's Letter to the Galatians

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2.6.2 (see pp 86ff) I outlined the recognised models by which separate groups can amalgamate into a superordinate group. In terms of the early church communities this represents the incorporation of Gentile believers – a group previously associated with an out-group – into a sect within Judaism. Paul's strategy seemed to be the technique of forming a superordinate group with common identity for both Jewish and Gentile believers (see p 89). However, such a strategy can cause problems if members of one of the subgroups begin to experience threat to their previous group identity. In such cases identification with the original group is intensified and the bias against the other subgroup (previously an out-group) is thereby increased. A proposed mechanism for alleviating this problem is for each subgroup to accept a dual identity whereby they are all members of the new superordinate group but, at the same time, retain the identity associated with their original group. Such a strategy seems to have been employed by the early church to solve the problem of the divisions between the Hebrews and Hellenists (*Acts* 6). The Hellenists were given their own leaders (as I argued previously, Ch. 2, p 93) and hence retained their identity as Hellenists whilst still being members of the superordinate grouping of the Jesus movement.

However, dual identity solutions work best when the subgroups are of equal status and power.¹ This was not necessarily the situation at the Jerusalem Conference. Here some of the Law-observant Jewish believers did not accept the Gentile believers as full members of the early church, and so eligible for salvation, without prior circumcision (as discussed previously, 4.2.1, pp 153ff). For the Law-observant Jewish believers, their identity as Jews cut across their identity as members of the Jesus movement. They

¹ Hornsey and Hogg, 2000a, pp 151-152; 2000b, p 253.

belonged to the grouping of Judaism in a way that uncircumcised Gentiles could not. At times when their Jewish identity within the Jesus movement seemed to be threatened, they would be inclined to revert to their original identity and take refuge in their identity as Jews with the subsequent possibility of schism. It was these differences in the understanding of identity between these Law-observant Jewish believers and the Pauline faction, for which the superordinate group identity of the Jesus movement was all important, that brought about the discussions which are recorded by Paul in *Galatians* 2.1-10.

The Jerusalem Church was faced with the task of reconciling the positions of both these factions in such a way that the identity of neither would be undermined to the extent that might split the Jesus movement into two separate and distinct groups. Socio-psychology supplies some models which can be useful in avoiding schism and some examples of their use in the Mediterranean world of the New Testament have been given in 2.6.2, pp 86ff. It is time to apply these insights specifically to the situation prevailing at the Jerusalem Conference as described in *Galatians* 2.1-10. In this chapter I shall begin by analyzing the two principal opposing groups represented at the Conference – the Pauline faction and the Law-observant Jewish faction. I shall then proceed to look closely at *Galatians* 2.6-9 in order to come to some understanding of the problems facing the Jerusalem Conference and the possible outcomes of its deliberations.

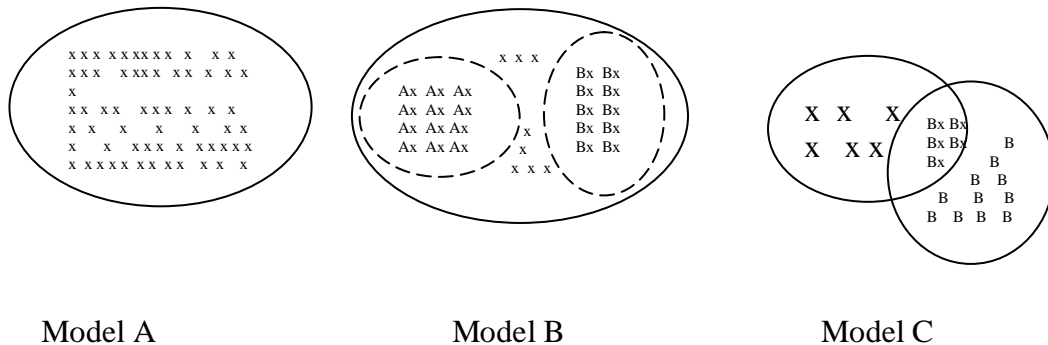
5.2 Sub-Group Relations Prior to the Jerusalem Conference

The Jerusalem Conference seems to have been precipitated in response to the activity of Jewish believers who advocated circumcision for Gentile believers (*Acts* 15.1 & 5; *Gal.* 2.4-5) and which some in the church at Antioch – the Pauline faction – opposed.² The initiative to obtain a definitive decision of the issue probably arose from the Pauline faction (*Acts* 15.2; *Gal.* 2.2) but was prompted by the activities of those advocating circumcision for all believers. It is, therefore, relevant to study the positions of both the Pauline faction and the circumcising Jewish believers.

² Watson (2007, pp 102-106) argues that circumcision was not an issue at the Jerusalem Conference and that the comment that 'Titus was not compelled to be circumcised' was a mere aside. This seems unlikely; for Paul to mention it at this point suggests it was a factor in the debate as is also indicated by *Acts* 15.

5.2.1 The Pauline Faction

In the initial description of recategorization into superordinate groups as a means of reducing inter-group bias and prejudice, several examples of Paul's use of this technique were given (2.6.2.2 pp 88ff). In the main, Paul appears to favour Model A in which ethnic or cultural subgroups are no longer relevant.



Thus:

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus, (*Gal. 3.28*)

or where

[c]ircumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but obeying the commandments of God is everything. (*1 Cor. 7.19*)

It is easy to understand Paul's stance when the situation of Gentile believers is considered. The Gentile believers, who converted from paganism to faith in Christ Jesus, left behind much of their previous identity. The shift from polytheism to monotheism must have entailed a complete change of life-style. The prohibition on worship of idols was probably a cause of alienation from much of their previous existence and experience. Paul frequently makes the contrast of 'before' and 'after'.

You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. (*1 Cor. 12.2*)

Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to beings that by nature are not gods. Now, however, that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by

God, how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits? How can you want to be enslaved to them again? (*Gal.* 4.8-9)

The contrast is not only between polytheism and monotheism but also between the sinfulness of the former life and the virtue of life in Christ.

When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death. But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life. (*Rom.* 6.20-22)

These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. But now you must get rid of all such things – anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. (*Col.* 3.7-8)

Although, in *1 Corinthians* 10.25-29, Paul seems to sanction contact with unbelievers, even to the extent of table fellowship which might involve food offered to idols, he draws the line at eating at the ‘table of demons’ (*1 Cor.* 10.21). It is acceptable to eat food offered to idols, for there are no other gods, but he draws the line at participating in the actual offering of the sacrifice, for

[y]ou cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. (*1 Cor.* 10.21)

Gooch, in his analysis of ‘dangerous foods’, suggests that sacrificing to the gods were part of most family celebrations – weddings, birthdays, funerals etc.³ He concludes

Corinthian Christians could expect to receive many invitations to occasions where just the sort of exception Paul notes – the explicit identification of some of the food as offered to gods – would likely be met. The problem Paul describes could not be avoided.⁴

What is likely for the Corinthian Christians was probably also likely for the Antiochene believers.

³ Gooch, 1993, pp 28-38.

⁴ Gooch, 1993, p 46.

Nor was isolation from major family occasions the only problem. For those Gentile believers, who had previously sought companionship in voluntary associations, similar problems occurred. Many voluntary associations were formed for cultic worship of the gods. Those which were initiated for other reasons, funeral associations or groups based on trade, included celebrations of festivals of the gods.⁵ Thus, any identity that the Gentile believers had which was based on such group membership would be lost on conversion to the Christ movement. Nor would those who had connections with philosophical groups be in any better position. Paul makes it clear that worldly wisdom is generally opposed to the teaching of Christ.

For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength. (*1 Cor.* 21-25).

Do not deceive yourselves. If you think that you are wise in this age, you should become fools so that you may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, 'He catches the wise in their craftiness,' and again, 'The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.' (*1 Cor.* 3.18-20).

The author of *Colossians* also warns against the philosophy of the present age.

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. (*Col.* 2.8)

Much of what had previously been sources of social identity for the Gentile believers was, therefore, no longer available. Apart from the possible identity associated with their

⁵ Wilson (Kloppenborg, and Wilson, 1996, p 7), in his introduction to the collection of essays on Voluntary Associations, notes that, although some associations were formed specifically for 'intense religious devotion ... all associations had a religious or cultic dimension.'

language, their social identity must now be derived predominantly from association with the community of believers.

The alienation following conversion is apparent in the church at Thessalonica. The believers there are being subjected to afflictions and persecutions (θλιψις) (*1 Thess.* 1.6; 3.7) at the hands of their own countrymen. Barclay, in his analysis of the social conflict at Thessalonica, attributes this affliction to the change from polytheism to monotheism.⁶ He counts the most probable cause of the Thessalonians' harassment as

the offensive abandonment by the Thessalonians of traditional religious practices as they turned from 'idols' to the 'true and living God'. The arrogant refusal of Christians to take part in, or to consider as valid, the worship of any god but their own was a cause of deep resentment in the Graeco-Roman world and is probably the root cause of the Thessalonians' troubles.⁷

In his commentary on Paul's *Letter to the Romans*, Esler makes some interesting comments on Paul's attempts at reinforcing the superordinate identity whilst maintaining the relevant subgroup identities.⁸ In this letter, Esler sees Paul as both reinforcing the superordinate identity of the Christ-believing community (i.e. recategorization) but, at the same time, allowing the continuing identity of the subgroups of Greek and Jew (i.e. dual identity). However, Esler sees this move as peculiar to *Romans*; speculating that

because of his previous experience in Galatia, where he had taken a tough line on Judeans but where he had not won the day ... Paul seems to have hit upon an aspect of successful recategorization ... The feature in question is that an attempt to bring two (sub)groups together under a superordinate identity is likely to fail if those conducting it take steps that threaten the preexisting (sub)group identities.⁹

It is obvious from this that Esler sees Paul as changing in his tactics in his efforts to maintain κοινωνία in Rome. His strategy of imposing a superordinate identity to the

⁶ Barclay, 1992, pp 49-74; 1993, pp 512-530.

⁷ Barclay, 1992, p 53; 1993.

⁸ Esler (2003, p 355) argues that Paul 'had made much of his own Israelite identity and had made quite clear (in the visual imagery of the olive tree above all) that the Judean and non-Judean elements of the Christ-movement retained their distinctiveness, indeed the former had precedence.'

⁹ Esler, 2003, p 360.

exclusion of subgroup identities has given way to a model of dual identities (see p 91), especially maintaining a Jewish identity alongside that of the believing community. From this it is obvious that Esler envisages Paul as pursuing a model of recategorization at the time of writing *Galatians* and, presumably, previous to this at the time of the Jerusalem Conference.

The evidence, therefore, points to the Pauline faction at the Jerusalem Conference pressing for recategorization into a superordinate group including Jewish and Gentile believers (Model A, see p 100) as the legitimate model of the Christ-believing community, and the only model compatible with the new identity of the Gentile believers.

Nanos, in his analysis of the Antioch dispute (*Gal.* 2.11-14), attributes the commensality problems to different understandings of the position of the Gentile believers.¹⁰ He proposes that the dispute was not over the food being eaten, the possibility of idolatry or the impurity of the Gentile believers but that Jews and Gentiles were eating together as equals.¹¹ Gentiles were eating with Jews not as pagan guests or as Gentiles on their way to becoming proselytes but as ‘full and equal members of this Jewish subgroup’.¹² While not necessarily agreeing with Nanos’ rationale for the commensality difficulties at Antioch (see chapter 6 below), his assessment that there was a substantial difference in the understanding of the status of the Gentile believers between the Pauline faction and the Law-observant Jewish believers within the early church is almost certainly correct.

5.2.2 The Law-Observant Jewish Faction

If the Pauline faction were pressing for a completely assimilated community, the evidence of the New Testament suggests that the aims of the more Law-observant Jewish believers were different – at least with regards to the Gentile believers who remained uncircumcised. Many of Paul’s problems appear to stem from ‘Judaizers’ at Antioch (*Gal.* 2.11-14), Jerusalem (*Gal.* 2.3), Galatia (*Gal.* 4.10; 6.12) and Philippi (*Phil.* 3.2-3)

¹⁰ Nanos, 2002.

¹¹ Nanos, 2002, pp 300-303.

¹² Nanos, 2002, p 301.

who, for various reasons, were not content to accept non-Torah-observant Gentile believers as fellow members of the Christ movement.

In the *Letter to the Galatians*, Paul complains about ψευδαδελφοί who spied on the freedom that he and his associates had ‘in Christ Jesus’ (*Gal.* 2.4). Such ‘freedom’ must refer to freedom from the Torah.¹³ Paul includes the narrative of Jerusalem and Antioch in order to influence the situation in Galatia.¹⁴ He sees obvious parallels with the current situation in Galatia. In Galatia, οἱ ἀναστατούντες are advocating circumcision (*Gal.* 5.12; 6.12) and possibly also the keeping of days and seasons (*Gal.* 4.10). Although Paul is derogatory and speaks of them in language which is pejorative, it is likely that his opponents would describe themselves differently. Their education and upbringing in Judaism had taught them to respect and value the Torah; the keeping of the Torah was the defining characteristic of the Jewish people as chosen by God. It was integral to their identity as Jews.¹⁵

It seems likely that these Jewish believers were initially content with their dual identity as Jews and as members of the Jesus movement, for the Jesus movement was a faction within Judaism. However, circumstances changed so as to threaten their Jewish identity. As noted previously, there are dangers of categorizing members with superordinate and dual identity (see pp 91ff) when a subgroup of the superordinate group begins to feel threatened. Threats to identity can precipitate an increased affiliation to the original subgroup and decreased attachment to the superordinate group. The issue of the entry of Gentile believers into the Jesus movement without circumcision appears to be at the heart of these feelings of threat since the thrust of the position of the Law-observant Jewish believers was that the Gentile believers must become Law observant. Whereas Gentile ‘sympathizers’ were familiar to Diaspora Jews, the position of the Gentile believers in the early church was significantly different from these ‘sympathizers’. As I have discussed in the previous chapter, Gentile believers had undergone the rite of baptism which, according to the Pauline faction, initiated them into full membership of the Jesus movement. While the Law-observant Jewish believers may have regarded

¹³ So Martyn, 1997, p 196; Betz, 1979 pp 90-91; Esler, 1998, p 74; Witherington, 1998a, p 136; Longenecker, 1990, p 52; Sim, 1998, pp 20 and 93; Dunn, 1993, p 99.

¹⁴ So Witherington, 1998a, p 127 and Longenecker, 1990, p 61.

¹⁵ Dunn sees the motives of the ‘false brothers’ as ensuring that ‘the new movement within Judaism remained true to the principles and practices of the covenant clearly laid down in the Torah’ (1993, p 99). Martyn argues that the ‘false brothers’ were concerned for the Gentile believers based on ‘their conviction that, at the day of judgement, God will judge all human beings on the basis of the Law’ (1997, p 196).

baptism as a preliminary rite of entry (i.e. not granting full membership), the emergence of leaders from within the Gentile subgroup, that I proposed in the previous chapter, would be an explicit signal that the Gentile believers were behaving as full members of the early church. For the Law-observant Jewish believers such leadership would be unacceptable.¹⁶ The emergence of uncircumcised Gentile leaders would undermine the status of the Law-observant Jewish believers and imply that the Gentile subgroup was beginning to exert inappropriate influence/power within the early church as a whole.¹⁷ To assume the roles of leadership the Gentile believers, in the eyes of the Law-observant Jewish believers, must be full members of the community – a position only achieved by taking on the full observance of the Torah including circumcision.

The threat to Jewish identity by the incorporation of non-Torah-observant Gentiles into the early church would seem to be at least two-fold. Firstly, for believers who also classed themselves as Law-observant Jews, there was the problem of irregular contact with uncircumcised Gentiles. It is obvious that Luke believed this to be problematic from the explanation he puts on Peter's lips in his dialogue with Cornelius:

You yourselves know that it is unlawful for a Jew to associate with or to visit a Gentile; but God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean.
(*Acts* 10.28)

and from the subsequent objection from 'circumcised believers' that Peter had gone to uncircumcised men and eaten with them (*Acts* 11.1-3). Similarly the dispute at Antioch arose over table-fellowship between Jewish and Gentile believers (*Gal.* 2.11-14). Secondly, there was the problem of salvation with its close association with God's exclusive covenant with Israel. Again *Acts* indicates that this concerned the more Law-observant believers for they came from Judea and taught

Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved'.
(*Acts* 15.1)

¹⁶ Socio-psychological studies have been performed on legitimate leadership and inter-group bias. Hornsey *et al.* (2003) demonstrated that bias between subgroups was greater when the power hierarchy was deemed illegitimate compared to when it was accepted as legitimate.

¹⁷ Hornsey and Hogg (2000a p 150) argue that, in a superordinate group with distinct subgroups, 'members would be highly sensitive to which subgroup was exerting more influence ... If an out-group has a majority impact on how a superordinate category is represented, the out-group is in a position in which it could negatively influence or even appropriate the in-group.'

5.2.2.1 Jewish/Gentile Interaction

The inclusion of many Gentiles in the early church without the requirement for circumcision would, inevitably, lead to increased contact between Jews and Gentiles – contact which, on some occasions, could be more intimate than that normally acceptable to Law-observant Jews (the opposition of Jews to intimate Gentile contact has been noted earlier in Section 5.2.1, above).¹⁸ Increased Jewish/Gentile contact meant pulling down some of the boundaries between Jews and Gentiles, boundaries which had delineated what it was to be Jewish.

Much of the academic discussion surrounding Jewish/Gentile contact has centred on table fellowship, in particular the table-fellowship which caused problems at Antioch (*Gal.* 2.11-14). There are basically two positions in the literature. One, represented by Esler, argues that contacts between Jews and Gentiles were very rare.¹⁹ Association with Gentiles involved the danger of impurity both because eating Gentile food incurred the risk of idolatry but also because Gentiles themselves were impure. The second, represented by Sanders and Dunn, argues that Jewish/Gentile social interaction did take place and that there was a spectrum of such interaction.²⁰ In this scenario, it was not the Gentiles *per se* who were to be avoided but the food eaten during table-fellowship with Gentiles which incurred the risk of idolatry or defilement by having been offered as sacrifice to the gods or being impure in other ways (as gnat contamination of oil, forbidden food such as pork).

Dunn initiated the debate on Jewish/Gentile fellowship by noting the tendency for Jews to avoid social contact with Gentiles but also concluded that some interaction did take place and that there was a broad spectrum of interaction.²¹ In the context of the Antioch dispute over table-fellowship (*Gal.* 2.11-14) he maintained that the problem was a requirement for a greater degree of observance of the Jewish food laws, especially with regard to ritual purity and tithing.²² While Sanders agrees that Gentiles may have been impure, he concludes that their impurity was of little consequence to Diaspora Jews for

¹⁸ Probably the best example is shared table fellowship during Eucharist meals when there seems to have been sharing of 'one bread' and one cup (*1 Cor.* 10.16-17; 11.27-28).

¹⁹ Esler, 1987, pp 71-109 and 1998, pp 93-116.

²⁰ Dunn, 1983; Sanders, 1990a, pp 178-180.

²¹ Dunn, 1983.

²² Dunn, 1990, p 154.

Diaspora Jews were ritually impure most of the time.²³ The problem of table-fellowship must, therefore, have been a consequence of the food eaten not the Gentiles *per se*. Table-fellowship entailed the possibility of eating forbidden or idolatrous foods which was abhorrent to law-abiding Jews. As to the tithing of food in the Diaspora, Sanders claims that tithing was not compulsorily practised in the Diaspora – there was nothing wrong with food which had not had part of it tithed.²⁴ Nonetheless, he, with Dunn, concludes that there was a broad spectrum of social contact between Jews and Gentiles.

Much of Sanders' argument opposes the position of Esler, who claims that intimate contact between Jews and Gentiles did not occur.²⁵ Using much the same sources as Sanders,²⁶ Esler contends that, although some Jews may have breached the regulations on Gentile association, these

Jews who permanently gave up the prohibitions which distinguished them from Gentiles ceased to be Jews.²⁷

Thus, for Esler, association between true Jews and Gentiles did not occur. In his later book, Esler does seem to modify his position somewhat in response to Sanders' criticism. He begins to make a distinction between 'meals in parallel' and true table-fellowship.²⁸ 'Meals in parallel' might be those occasions where Jews brought their own food and wine and sat at different tables (as in *Joseph and Aseneth*). True table-fellowship, as occurred at a Eucharistic celebration, meant sharing and passing round the *one* bread and *one* cup. According to Esler, this level of sharing was impossible for a Jew.²⁹ Despite Esler's arguments, the evidence suggests that there was a broad spectrum of association between Jews and Gentiles and most commentators seem to adopt this position.³⁰

²³ Sanders, 1990a, p 175; 1990b, pp 271-272. Sanders argues that ritual impurity was only important when Jews were entering the temple, eating Passover or eating second tithe food. For the rest most Jews were ritually impure most of the time for they had contact with corpses (an impurity which was only removed at the Temple), semen-impurity or sexual intercourse.

²⁴ Sanders, 1990b, pp 284-308.

²⁵ Esler, 1987, pp 71-109.

²⁶ Literature such as *Joseph and Aseneth*, the *Book of Jubilees*, *Letter of Aristeas* and rabbinic literature such as the *Abotah Zarah*.

²⁷ Esler, 1987, p 86.

²⁸ Esler, 1998, p 106.

²⁹ Esler, 1998, p 108.

³⁰ As for example Hill, 1991, pp 131-142; Bockmuehl, 2000, pp 56-61; Zetterholm, 2003, pp 149-155; Taylor, 1992, pp 126-129.

Holmberg has also entered the debate claiming that Sanders has not differentiated sufficiently the difference between ‘public’ and ‘intimate’ associations.³¹ Whereas he agrees with Sanders that ‘public’ contact occurred regularly at the theatres, markets and baths, he contends that Jews would not readily allow *goyim* into their ‘intimate’ sphere. Such intimate spheres were predominantly marriage and table-fellowship. Marriage with *goyim* was prohibited and could not be countenanced without prior conversion to Judaism, for the seed of the Israelites was holy and peoples of other lands were unclean and polluted because of their abominations (*Ezra* 9.11).³² As to table-fellowship, ‘precautionary measures’ needed to be taken in order that commensality between Jews and Gentiles could take place. Holmberg sees little problem with meals hosted by Jews in a Jewish environment where due care could be taken to ensure the purity of the food but argues that it was reciprocal hospitality where Jews dined with Gentiles in a Gentile home that was problematic. It was this lack of reciprocity that gains the Jews their reputation for misanthropy and exclusiveness.³³ For Holmberg, this restriction on table-fellowship

was a social fact in first century Judaism. It was also a reality of enormous significance for the social identity of Jewish people. It kept people in their right places, on a deep level conformed to God’s sacred order for this world: the election of the Jewish nation.³⁴

Any breach or encroachment of the rules of social contact between Jews and Gentiles was, therefore, threatening to the identity of the Jews as God’s chosen people. However, it is worth noting that Holmberg considers table-fellowship in a Jewish environment acceptable whereas the same (intimate?) contact but in a Gentile environment was

³¹ Holmberg, 1998, pp 401-404

³² The dictates of Nehemiah and Ezra illustrate the prohibition. ‘After these things had been done, the officials approached me and said, “The people of Israel, the priests, and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands with their abominations, from the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and for their sons. Thus the holy seed has mixed itself with the peoples of the lands, and in this faithlessness the officials and leaders have led the way”. When I heard this, I tore my garment and my mantle and said ... “Therefore do not give your daughters to their sons, neither take their daughters for your sons, and never seek their peace or prosperity, so that you may be strong and eat the good of the land and leave it for an inheritance to your children forever”’ (*Ezra* 9.1-12). The people who had already intermarried with women of the other lands then decided ‘let us make a covenant with our God to send away all these wives and their children, according to the counsel of my lord and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law’ (*Ezra* 10.3). Similarly in *Nehemiah* ‘We will not give our daughters to the peoples of the land or take their daughters for our sons’ (*Neh.* 10.30).

³³ As in Tacitus, *Histories* 5.5.2 and Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius*, V.33.

³⁴ Holmberg, 1998, p 404.

unacceptable because of the danger of idolatry. It would seem, therefore, that Holmberg, despite his criticism of Sanders for not distinguishing between ‘intimate’ and ‘public’ spheres,³⁵ ultimately views the food eaten rather than the ‘intimate’ contact made with Gentiles to be the obstacle to table-fellowship.

Bauckham has recently reviewed the problems of Jewish/Gentile contact.³⁶ He argues that Jewish contact with Gentiles was not objectionable because of the ritual impurity of Gentiles – Gentiles were not obligated to fulfill Torah and, therefore, could not be deemed ritually impure. They were, however, generally regarded as morally impure primarily because of their idolatrous and sexual practices,³⁷ and were profane because ‘they did not belong to the holy people of Israel’.³⁸ The profanity of Gentiles was only relevant in the context of Jerusalem and its Temple; only there could their profanity defile the Holy.³⁹ Logically then those Gentiles who repented of their idolatry and immorality became pure though still profane. Thus, Bauckham concludes, it was possible for Gentiles sympathetic to Judaism to be accepted by Jews in the Diaspora but not in Jerusalem where their profanity was still problematic.⁴⁰ Nonetheless he infers that, outside the problem of profanity, close contact with Gentiles was shunned because of the danger of their corrupting influence on Jews who might contract some of their moral impurity.⁴¹ In the context of the early church, particularly Peter’s meeting with Cornelius (*Acts* 10), Bauckham contends that God showed Peter by means of a dream that Gentiles were neither impure nor profane.⁴² The controversy within the church arose because there were two understandings of the Gentiles’ purity – that of Peter (and Paul and Barnabas) who regarded Gentile believers as pure and holy by reason of their baptism and gift of the Spirit and that of the circumcisers who saw Torah observance as the only assurance of purity and holiness.⁴³

³⁵ Holmberg, 1998, pp 401-403.

³⁶ Bauckham, 2005, pp 91-142. Bockmuehl (2000, p 159) similarly attributes the Jewish aversion to Gentiles to idolatry quoting the Qumran *Community Document* (12.8) which prohibited selling pure animals to Gentiles because of the risk that they would be sacrificed to idols.

³⁷ As in *Jubilees* 1.9; 20.5, 7; 22.16.

³⁸ Bauckham, 2005, p 100.

³⁹ Bauckham, 2005, p 101.

⁴⁰ Bauckham, 2005, pp 101-102, 114.

⁴¹ Bauckham, 2005, pp 111-113.

⁴² Bauckham, 2005, pp 114-115.

⁴³ Bauckham, 2005, pp 117-119. Bauckham claims that ‘the principal issues in dispute are the boundaries of the messianic people of God – whether they are defined by the gift of the Spirit or by circumcision and Torah

Whether or not Bauckham is correct in attributing resistance to close Jewish association with Gentiles to the danger of being infected by their moral impurity, his reasoning accords well with the argument given previously here (Chapter 4.2, see pp 152ff) of the different understanding of the initiation rite of baptism as conferring preliminary or full membership of the early church (and hence purity and holiness) on the Gentile believers.⁴⁴ The position of Sanders and Dunn, too, in arguing that there was a broad spectrum of association between Jews and Gentiles also fits, for it is likely that the same spectrum occurred within the early church just as it did in Judaism as a whole. Thus there would be a spectrum of attitudes to the Gentile believers within the Jewish faction of the early church – some being more relaxed about Jewish/Gentile contact while others wishing to retain the distinctive boundaries between Jews and Gentiles which was part of Jewish identity.

5.2.2.2 Salvation and the Jews

The second threat to the identity of Law-observant Jewish believers was linked with their hopes of salvation. Gentile believers were baptized into Christ (*Gal.* 3.27) and this baptism brought the promise of salvation to them as Gentiles (*Gal.* 3.8; *1 Thess.* 2.16) – a salvation which previously had been exclusive to Israel through God's Covenant with his chosen people. This understanding of salvation, as exclusive to the covenantal people, may be pivotal. There were differences in the way Judaism understood the salvation of Gentiles as the Jewish literature shows.⁴⁵ The apocalyptic *Book of Jubilees* holds out no hope for the salvation of Gentiles.

And every one that is born, the flesh of whose foreskin is not circumcised on the eighth day, belongs not to the children of the covenant which the Lord made with Abraham, but to the children of destruction; ... [he is destined] to be destroyed and slain from the earth. (*Jubilees* 15.26)

Similarly *4 Ezra* assumes the destruction of the godless after prior judgement but the chosen people will receive mercy.

observance – and the way in which Gentile believers can attain moral purity – whether by faith and repentance alone or by circumcision and Torah-observance in addition' (p 118).

⁴⁴ Bauckham (2005, pp 135-139) concludes that the Antioch dispute of *Gal.* 2.11-14 preceded the Jerusalem Conference described in *Acts* 15.

⁴⁵ Extensive analysis of the various attitudes of Jews to Gentiles are given in Donaldson (1997, pp 51-80), Fredriksen (2002, pp 239-247) and McKnight (1990, pp 11-29).

He will denounce them for their ungodliness and for their wickedness, and will display before them their contemptuous dealings. For first he will bring them alive before his judgment seat, and when he has reproved them, then he will destroy them. (4 *Ezra* 12.32-33)

Less condemnatory is the view that the Gentiles will return to be judged by Israel and be subservient to them.

And he will have gentile nations serving him under his yoke. (*Psalms of Solomon* 17.30)

In other works, the righteous Gentiles return to participate fully in salvation, although it is not clear whether this salvation is dependent on conversion to Judaism.

After the destruction of the unrighteous, the isles and cities will say 'Come, let us all fall on the ground and entreat the immortal king, the great eternal God. Let us send to the Temple, since he alone is sovereign and let us all ponder the Law of the Most High God, who is most righteous of all throughout the earth (*Psalms of Solomon* 17.30)

or

And then, indeed, he will raise up a kingdom for all ages among men, he who once gave the holy Law to the pious . . . From every land they will bring incense and gifts to the house of the great God. There will be no other house among men, even for future generations to know (*Psalms of Solomon* 17.30)

and this expectation is rooted in the Hebrew Scriptures. Isaiah depicts the golden age when all the nations will return and acknowledge the God of Israel:

Many peoples shall come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem (*Is.* 2.2-3)

and

Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn ... Foreigners shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister to you; for in my wrath I struck you down, but in my favour I have had mercy on you. Your gates shall always be open; day and night they shall not be shut. (*Is.* 60.3-11)

But the salvation of the foreign nations is dependent on their treatment of Israel as Isaiah continues:

For the nation and kingdom that will not serve you shall perish; those nations shall be utterly laid waste. (*Is.* 60.12)

As *Is.* 2.2-3 indicates, the salvation of the other nations is also dependent on their worship of the one true God of Israel and walking in his paths, which suggests that monotheism will be required and perhaps also some adherence to the Torah. Thus Isaiah stipulates that serving God, keeping the Sabbath and the covenant are also necessary.

And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, all who keep the sabbath, and do not profane it, and hold fast my covenant – these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. Thus says the Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, I will gather others to them besides those already gathered. (*Is.* 56.6-8)

The extent that the other nations who return to the mountain of God take on Judaism is unclear. Sabbath observance and walking in the ways of the Lord are needed but does ‘holding fast to the covenant’ include circumcision? It is possible that even those texts that envisage the salvation of other nations also foresee their conversion to Judaism.

The early second century debate between Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus and Rabbi Joshua ben Hananyah concerning the salvation of the Gentiles exemplifies these differences.⁴⁶ Rabbi Eliezer took the hard line that no Gentiles would be saved based on *Ps.* 9.17

The wicked shall depart to Sheol, all the nations that forget God.

⁴⁶ *Tosefta Sanhedrin* 13.2.

Rabbi Joshua, arguing that the Psalm only counted as ‘wicked’ those nations which forgot God, contended that there must be righteous Gentiles who did not forget God and who would have a portion in the world to come.⁴⁷ But exactly what a ‘righteous Gentile’ is is not defined. This is typical of the opposing views of the Shammaites and Hillelites in the second century, the Shammaites taking a hard line position on the Gentiles while the Hillelites were more accommodating.

Overall, there is no clear-cut attitude towards the salvation of the Gentiles in the Second Temple literature.⁴⁸ The Gentiles are important as a point of definition over against Judaism but their own position in relation to God and their destiny at the eschaton were topics on which there was no general agreement. The Gentiles could not simply be included for that threatened Israel’s special position as God’s chosen people but, as the social context of the Jews – particularly the Diaspora Jews – changed and Jewish communities encountered Gentiles more frequently, accommodation to living among other nations was inevitable. Tomson, commenting on the Hillelite and Shammaite debates, attributes this ‘bi-polar reference system’ of ancient Judaism to its surroundings,

one side being the prophetic calling of Israel, God’s chosen people, and the other, the co-existence of Jews with other ethnic entities in the Persian and Graeco-Roman world.⁴⁹

Like the differing attitudes to social contact with Gentiles, the attitudes towards Gentile salvation were diverse and it is not unreasonable to assume that a similar spectrum of opinions was present in the early church as in Judaism in general with a more hard line stance being taken by the Law-observant Palestinian Jews.

The jealous zeal that Jews felt for the Torah also requires consideration. The observance of the Torah was Israel’s part of the covenant with God. It was the gift of the covenant, with its implicit observance of Torah, which separated them from other nations and demonstrated their special position as the chosen people of God. So Moses could instruct the people thus:

⁴⁷ Cited in Bockmuehl, 2000, p 158.

⁴⁸ Donaldson, 1997, pp 74-75.

⁴⁹ Tomson, 1990, p 235.

You must observe them [statutes and ordinances] diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!" For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is whenever we call to him? And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire Law that I am setting before you today? (*Deut.* 4.6-7)

The Law was precious to Israel; it set them apart, in a positive way, from other nations. Seeman argues that jealousy/zeal is the emotion 'an honourable person is expected to exhibit towards that to which s/he is perceived to possess exclusive access'.⁵⁰ As seen in the Deuteronomy extract above, this describes well the emotion that the people of Israel felt towards Torah. Seeman continues that such jealousy is triggered when this exclusive possession is perceived to be illegitimately desired by others who, in so desiring, cross or violate a purity line. These purity lines separate what is exclusive from what is common. When such violation occurs, it can be understood as an affront or injury. The origins for such feelings of jealousy appear to be the perception of limited good.⁵¹ Any acquisition by one person or group can only come about by the equivalent loss by another person or group.⁵² In an environment in which honour and shame were pivotal values,⁵³ this extension of salvation beyond the confines of circumcised Israel would have generated considerable emotion of envy in those Jewish believers who did not accept the inclusion of uncircumcised Gentiles into the covenant at this time. Jealous resentment at the inclusion of uncircumcised Gentiles into the salvation, which had previously been the exclusive privilege of those who lived within God's covenant with Israel by observing the whole Torah, would provide an additional motive for the zeal of the 'circumcisers', or Law-observant Jewish believers. They sought to include the Gentile members of the early church fully in the salvific covenant in the same way in which they themselves were included.

A similar emphasis on salvation is given by Neusner who has looked at *Gal.* 2 in the context of early rabbinic literature and the literature of the sages with respect to

⁵⁰ Seeman, 1993, pp 185-186.

⁵¹ Seeman, 1993, pp 185-188; Malina, 2001, pp 126-128.

⁵² Seeman, 1993, p 186; Malina, 2001, pp 81-107.

⁵³ Malina, 2001, pp 27-57.

Gentile salvation.⁵⁴ He sees Paul's stance as akin to that of the sages, whereas the Law-observant Jewish believers hold a position similar to the rabbis. Neusner associates the disputes with 'cultic cleanness', but he sees Paul as recategorizing purity so that it is a consequence of salvation not of Jewish/Gentile relationships and interaction.⁵⁵ He attributes this to Paul's personal eschatology – 'It is not I who live but Christ who lives in me' (*Gal.* 2.20). Baptism is death to this present age and rebirth in Christ so that salvation is already here. James and the other Law-observant Jewish believers understand a different *kairos* where salvation is still in the future leaving the Torah as that which defines Israel:

the Torah remains man's medium of regeneration, sanctifying his task, and Jesus the harbinger of what is to be.⁵⁶

In addition, both Paul and the sages define Israel in terms of salvation, while, for the rabbis it is those who accept the Torah who are called Israel.⁵⁷ Yet again, on Neusner's interpretation, a different understanding of baptism among the various factions of the early church would determine the position/status of Gentile believers with regard to salvation.

Early commentators suggest that the understanding of the covenant as God's precious gift to his chosen people had deteriorated with time and that the strict observance of Torah as a means of salvation replaced the understanding of God's mercy and faithfulness as primary in the salvific history. Thus Kennedy could say:

Obedience to the Law, therefore, is the chief token of its [Israel's] acknowledgement of the Divine grace. But, as this obedience came to involve the observance of minute regulations, the notion of merit ... overshadowed that of the Covenant.⁵⁸

More recently, Sanders has completed a detailed study of Jewish attitudes to the Law in the 1st century CE, surveying a range of contemporary sources such as *Psalms of Solomon*, *Jubilees*, *Dead Sea Scrolls* etc.⁵⁹ His conclusion is that such an attitude is not

⁵⁴ Neusner, 2005.

⁵⁵ Neusner, 2005, p 277.

⁵⁶ Neusner, 2005, p 304.

⁵⁷ Neusner, 2005, p 300.

⁵⁸ Kennedy, 1915, p 392.

⁵⁹ Sanders, 1977.

evident except possibly in 4 *Ezra*.⁶⁰ In all readings, except 4 *Ezra*, the Covenant is still regarded as God's merciful gift to Israel, indicating his special grace towards his chosen people. Obedience to the Law 'maintains one's position in the covenant, but does not earn God's grace as such'.⁶¹ Obedience to the Law is the appropriate behaviour for remaining in the Covenant, but 'election and ultimately salvation cannot be earned, but depend on God's grace'.⁶² It is reasonable, then, that zeal for the Law and pride at its possession by Israel was instrumental in determining the attitude of the Law-observant Jews when dealing with the Gentile converts to the Jesus movement.

5.2.2.3 The Law-Observant Jewish faction and Social Identity Theory

Paul's efforts to create a superordinate group, while it may have reduced the ethnic prejudice of Gentiles towards Jews, probably exacerbated the tension between Gentile and Law-observant Jewish believers. Paul tried to implant the superordinate identity of believers in Christ into Jews, as in this passage:

We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; yet we know that a person is justified not by the works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law. (*Gal.* 2.15-16)

Yet, when Paul does this, he, inevitably, undermines the observance of the Mosaic Law.⁶³ This observance is one of the principal indicators of Jewish identity. Thus, by inculcating the identity of the superordinate group, Paul, at the same time, undermines Jewish identity.

The identity of the Jewish believers was not confined to the early church communities; they were Jews too. Jewish believers were still in close contact with other Jews who were not members of the early church, as can be seen in *Acts* 2.46-47:

⁶⁰ Sanders, 1977, pp 419-421.

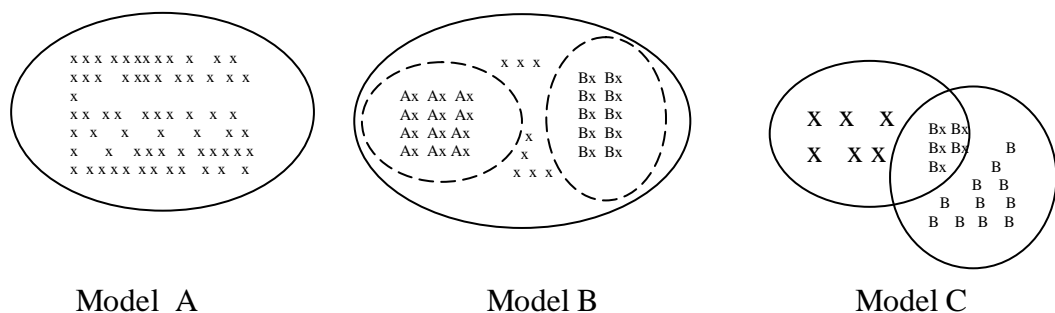
⁶¹ Sanders, 1977, p 420.

⁶² Sanders, 1977, p 422.

⁶³ As Barclay (1996b) has argued in connection with Romans 14.

Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people.

In the understanding of Social Identity and Self-categorization Theories, the Law-observant Jewish believers cut across two groups. As Jews they were a subgroup within the early church but, as members of the early church – still a sect within Judaism – they were a subgroup of Judaism. The Law-observant Jewish believers might, therefore, understand their situation in terms of crosscutting recategorization as depicted in Model C (section 2.6.2.4 pp 97ff).



The early church represents a superordinate group to which both believing Jews and Gentiles belong but, in addition, there is a second superordinate grouping, Judaism (B), to which the believing Jews (Bx) belong (and possibly derive most of their social identity) but from which the believing Gentiles (x) are excluded, unless they submit to circumcision and its implications of complete Torah observance.

However, as mentioned above when the topic of crosscutting categorization was discussed (see p 97), there can be a danger with identity in the crosscutting categorization. Where the threatened in-group can also identify with another, separate, superordinate group to which the conflicting subgroup does not belong, the threatened in-group experiences less threat to their identity because their identity is not solely dependent on membership of this particular superordinate group.⁶⁴ They can rely more on their identity as members of the other superordinate group. This is applicable to the Jewish believers. As the number of Gentile converts increased, it is reasonable to assume that the more Law-observant Jewish believers began to experience a threat to their Jewish identity. Firstly, Jewish believers were now more likely to be involved in frequent but

⁶⁴ Hornsey and Hogg, 2000a, p 151.

unconventional contact with uncircumcised Gentiles. Secondly, Gentile believers were beginning to have increasing influence and possibly leadership within some communities. Thirdly, Gentile believers were baptized into Christ (*Gal.* 3.27) and this baptism brought the promise of salvation to Gentiles (*Gal.* 3.8; *1 Thess.* 2.16) – a salvation which previously had been the exclusive possession of the people of God’s covenant with Israel. This perceived threat to their Jewish identity would, therefore, tend to increase the self-categorization of Law-observant Jewish believers as Jews, with the danger that Judaism would become their dominant, and possibly only, identity. Models derived from Social Identity and Self-Categorization Theories would indicate, therefore, that, as the Law-observant Jewish believers experienced greater threat to their identity, they would become more conscious of their identity within Judaism and more observant of the boundaries which defined Judaism. Hence, the total observance of the Torah would become more, not less, important to Law-observant Jewish believers and Gentile believers would only be acceptable in so far as they conformed to Judaism.

5.3 The Jerusalem Conference as described by Paul in the Letter to the Galatians

Before looking at the *Letter to the Galatians* as a source of evidence about the Jerusalem Conference, some preliminary comments are appropriate. Paul describes the Jerusalem Conference in just ten verses (*Gal.* 2.1-10). It is a section of the letter in which Paul is animated by his topic and, as a result, is not as logical as he might have been.⁶⁵ For instance, at one point he refers to the ‘false brothers’ (ψευδαδελφοί) in pejorative terms.⁶⁶

But because of false believers secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might enslave us – we did not submit to them even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might always remain with you. (*Gal.* 2.4-5)

The verse is an anacoluthon and may be part of the Jerusalem narrative or may be a parenthesis referring back to another occasion. It is unclear whether Paul is referring to

⁶⁵ Martyn, (1997, p 195), in discussing this anacoluthon, describes Paul here as ‘turning his attention to a group of actors who caused – and cause – an increase in his pulse rate’.

⁶⁶ They come to spy and are secretly smuggled in. Witherington (1998a, p 136 n143) suggests that ‘Paul has especially chosen these military/political terms because of the sort of rhetoric he wants to offer here’.

events in Jerusalem or Antioch. Opinion is divided.⁶⁷ His language also reflects his emotional commitment to his topic.⁶⁸ He not only mentions, in the most pejorative of language, fellow believers as ψευδαδελφοί, but also refers to the principal apostles as οἱ δοκούντες εἶναι τι, but with the provision ὅποιοί ποτε ἦσαν οὐδέν μοι διαφέρει (*Gal.* 2.6). In the opening sections of the *Letter to the Galatians*, Paul aims to emphasize his independence from the Jerusalem church, claiming that his gospel came to him directly from Christ Jesus (*Gal.* 1.11-12; 15-17), but, at the same time, he wants to show that he is still preaching the same gospel as the Jerusalem apostles (*Gal.* 1.6-9). Thus, Paul's motives need to be borne in mind when dealing with this section; much of what he says is polemical and needs to be considered in the light of his motives and attitudes,⁶⁹ yet he was an eyewitness to, and participant in, the Jerusalem Conference.

The Jerusalem Conference (*Gal.* 2.1-10) met to resolve the question of the position and status of believing Gentiles in the early church. However, implicit in that question was also the question of the status and identity of Jewish believers. The difficulty was to reconcile the different models for the understanding of the early church (Model A and C) to the satisfaction of all factions.

Basically Paul gives three outcomes of the Conference.

1. First of all, not even [ἀλλ' οὐδέ] Titus, although he was a Gentile, was compelled to be circumcised (*Gal.* 2.3). Most commentators take this as the actual decision of the Conference – that the Gentile believers need not be circumcised to be members of the early church. However, for Paul this decision is specific for Titus.
2. Paul stresses that 'those reckoned to be something' added nothing to the gospel that he preached (*Gal.* 2.6 – ἐμοὶ γὰρ οἱ δοκοῦντες οὐδὲν προσανέθεντο). This statement of Paul perhaps need to be understood in the context of the polemic of

⁶⁷ For example, Witherington (1998a, pp 135-136), Betz (1979, pp 88-89), Esler (1998, p 131) and Longenecker (1990, p 50) argue for a Jerusalem location for the 'spies' but Watson (1986, pp 50-51 and 2007, p 104), Burton (1921, p 78), Bruce (1982 p 115), Taylor (1992, p 101) and Martyn (1997, p 196) suppose an Antiochene location. Walker 1992, p 506) also argues for an Antiochene location but times the incident prior to the Jerusalem Conference.

⁶⁸ Dunn speculates that the anacoluthon may have been a Pauline ploy, serving 'Paul's polemic better than explicit details', but equally being 'the strength of his feeling overcoming his ability to express himself clearly' (1993, p 97).

⁶⁹ So Holmberg, 1978, p 18 – 'this report [Paul's account of the Jerusalem Conference] is not distinguished by its dispassionate objectivity', and Barclay (1987, pp 75-76) — 'this is no calm and rational conversation that we are overhearing, but a fierce piece of polemic in which Paul feels his whole identity and mission are threatened' (p 75).

the letter in which he is anxious to stress his independence from the Jerusalem church; he later acknowledges that the leaders did ‘add’ something – that he remember the poor (*Gal.* 2.10).

3. For Paul, the most important finding of the Conference appears to be the acknowledgement of his mission to the Gentiles – an acknowledgement which encompasses a separate mission to the Jews. The importance of this for Paul is apparent from the fact that he repeats this finding three times in the course of just three verses. Each time he stresses the differences between his gospel/apostleship to the Gentiles/uncircumcised as opposed to Peter’s gospel/apostleship to the Jews/circumcised.

On the contrary, when they saw that [1] *I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel for the circumcised* (for [2] *he who worked through Peter making him an apostle to the circumcised also worked through me in sending me to the Gentiles*), and when James and Cephas and John, who were acknowledged pillars, recognized the grace that had been given to me, they gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, agreeing that [3] *we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised*.

I shall look at these three findings of the Jerusalem Conference separately.

5.3.1 Galatians 2.3

Paul gives his readers the verdict on the circumcision of Titus early in his account of the Jerusalem Conference. It is not given in the context of the agreement of κοινωνία (*Gal.* 2.9) where the participants shake hands on the contract, or during the short discussion of Paul’s gospel and mission (*Gal.* 2.7-8). It is unlikely, therefore, that the issue of Titus’s circumcision was the main outcome of the Conference in Paul’s opinion.

Previously (pp 87ff), I suggested that one reason Paul took Titus to Jerusalem was to establish direct contact between the Jerusalem community and a member of the Gentile believing community of Antioch – such a move is a recognized strategy to reduce ethnic and/or cultic bias and prejudice according to Contact Theory (see pp 87ff). Both laboratory and field studies show that, for such contact to be successful in alleviating

bias, the encounter should both be deemed pleasant and also the out-group member must be typical of the out-group, representing their views and with traits and behaviour which are characteristic of the out-group.⁷⁰ It is precisely these qualities of social attractiveness and reflecting the norms of the subgroup which are important in leadership.⁷¹ Hogg, basing his argument on Turner's self-categorization theory,⁷² has proposed that, when a particular (sub)group starts to become relevant in its own right, personal characteristics which are prototypical of the (sub)group are as important in the leader as the more traditional leadership schemata of status in the wider community, education and wealth.⁷³ In the previous chapter (pp 168ff), I suggested that Titus was present at the Jerusalem Conference as an emerging leader of the Gentile believing community at Antioch.⁷⁴ It is in the context of Titus, as the leader of the Gentile believers, that Paul can say 'Not even [ὁλλ' οὐδέ] Titus was compelled to be circumcised'.

In conclusion, therefore, *Galatians* 2.3 is important as it demonstrates that even the **leaders** of the Gentile believers were not required to be circumcised. The Jerusalem 'pillars' accepted Titus as an emerging leader without compelling him to be circumcised. Paul includes this comment on Titus as an aside within the account of the Jerusalem Conference. His inference is that, if not even a Gentile leader (and, by the time of writing *Galatians*, Titus was already a renowned Gentile leader) was required to be circumcised, then the Galatian Gentile believers would certainly not have to submit to the knife. Thus the emphasis of the non-requirement of circumcision of Titus seems to apply more to the role of leader than to be a general outcome of the Jerusalem Conference in connection with Gentile believers.

5.3.2 *Galatians* 2.6

Paul's second 'outcome' of the Jerusalem Conference is that 'those reputed to be something' added nothing (οὐδὲν προσανέθεντο) to the gospel which he preached. This assertion is the culmination of a continuing argument which began in chapter 1. In Chapter 1, Paul had stressed the independence of his gospel which he had not received 'from a man' nor had a man taught it to him; it had come to him as a revelation

⁷⁰ Wilder, 1984, pp 323-333; Weber and Crocker, 1983, pp 961-977; Rothbart and Park, 1986, pp 131-142.

⁷¹ Hogg, 2001b, p 188-190; Hais *et al.* 1997, pp 1095-1098.

⁷² Turner *et al.*, 1987.

⁷³ Hogg, 2001b, pp 188-189; Hornsey and Hogg, 2000a, 2001, p 151.

⁷⁴ See previous chapter (pp 168ff).

(ἀποκάλυψις) from Jesus Christ (*Gal.* 1.12). So sure of his gospel was Paul that he did not consult with any man (εὐθέως οὐ προσανεθέμην σαρκὶ καὶ αἵματι) before going to Arabia and Damascus (*Gal.* 1.16). After three years, when he did visit Jerusalem,⁷⁵ he saw only Peter and James. At the same time, Paul insists that his gospel is the same as that preached by other followers of Jesus Christ for there is no other gospel (*Gal.* 1.7). Despite this, Paul does appear to be apprehensive for, after fourteen years, he goes to Jerusalem to set before (ἀνατίθεμαι) those of repute the gospel he has preached. He admits the possibility that he might be running (present subjunctive) or have run (aorist) in vain (εἰς κενόν) (*Gal.* 2.2). Thus Paul is asserting his independence from the Jerusalem church but also asserting that they preach the same gospel and approved his gospel.⁷⁶

Esler has rightly noted that it is probable that honour is at stake here.⁷⁷ Esler claims that the ‘circumcision party’ would have been shamed by the acceptance of Titus without circumcision – a shame which would be deepened by the acceptance of Paul’s gospel. However, if honour and shame were at stake for the ‘circumcision party’ the same would be true of Paul. Paul’s honour was at stake in the findings of the Jerusalem church; the Jerusalem church may have found against him and shown him to be ‘running in vain’. Witherington interprets the ‘adding nothing’ as neither adding nor subtracting anything to Paul’s ‘status or honor rating’.⁷⁸ Such an interpretation is consistent with the emphasis Paul places on ἐμοί by placing it at the beginning of the final phrase⁷⁹ – Paul is taking the verdict of the Jerusalem ‘pillars’ very personally which is a stance compatible with his personal honour being involved in the verdict.⁸⁰ Taylor notes that Paul’s honour is also at stake in the Galatian situation and accounts for Paul’s emphasis on his acceptance as a vindication of his honour in the Galatian situation.⁸¹

⁷⁵ ἱστορέω implies visiting and getting acquainted with rather than being taught.

⁷⁶ Dunn (1993, p 103) says ‘[t]he balancing act is spectacular’.

⁷⁷ Esler, 1998, p 132.

⁷⁸ Witherington (1998a, pp 139-140) who also notes that the use of πρόσωπον in this verse is a reminder of passages such as Lev. 19.15, Deut. 1.17 where discussion of ‘face’ is associated with God’s disregard of status of humans.

⁷⁹ So Dunn, 1993, p 103 and Martyn, 1997, p 200.

⁸⁰ Dunn, 1993, p 103.

⁸¹ Taylor (1992, p 165) says ‘Paul is able to personalize the account because the cause he had represented had been vindicated and he claims that victory for himself’.

In addition to the honour/shame dilemma, the passage may also depict a challenge to Paul's leadership. If the Jerusalem leaders had modified in any way Paul's 'gospel', his authority and status as a leader of the Gentile believers would have been jeopardized. As mentioned previously in connection with Titus (section 4.5 pp 168ff), according to the social identity model, where group identity is salient, being prototypical of the group is an important requirement for leadership. If Paul's gospel had been changed (as for example by increasing the requirement for Torah observance), his position would have been shown to be atypical of the larger group.

In chapter 2 (see p 67) I outlined Hogg's theory that there is a 'prototypicality gradient' within any group with some members being more prototypical than others.⁸² The prototype of a group is in flux when social context is in flux and can change depending on the out-group to which the in-group compares itself, and hence from which it derives part of its identity.⁸³ This social identity theory of leadership can be applied to the positions occupied by the Pauline and Jewish factions at the Jerusalem Conference (*Gal.* 2.1-10).

That the social context of the Antiochene church was in a state of flux is evidenced from the work of Zetterholm. Zetterholm, in his work on the formation of Christianity at Antioch, proposes that a changing social environment for Diaspora Jews existed at Antioch.⁸⁴ He analyses the situation of immigrant Jews within the city in terms of social integration and concludes that such a situation leads to 'value-changing processes'.⁸⁵ His argument is based on the change within the Jewish immigrants from majority status as experienced within Israel to minority status within the Diaspora where religious beliefs are pluralistic. This change from majority to minority status 'promotes changes in the individual's value system'.⁸⁶ Using contemporary data from studies on Muslim immigration in modern Europe, he suggests that, under such conditions of immigration, religion becomes a more personal choice. This personal choice results in three basic approaches – 'traditionalistic, secular or innovative tendencies'.⁸⁷ Thus believers have the choice to adhere even more zealously to traditional beliefs, abandon

⁸² Hogg, 2001c, pp 197-212.

⁸³ Hogg and van Knippenberg, 2003, pp 8-9.

⁸⁴ Zetterholm, 2003, pp 53-111.

⁸⁵ Zetterholm, 2003, p 55.

⁸⁶ Zetterholm, 2003, p 57.

⁸⁷ Zetterholm, 2003, p 60.

belief completely and become totally assimilated into the new culture, or construct new ways of expressing their belief influenced by the new culture in which they find themselves. He concludes that the new Jesus movement was a form of religious innovation resulting, in part, from the new environment in which the Jewish immigrants found themselves and their attempts to assimilate into it. In the context of the present discussion, Zetterholm's work supports the understanding of the Antiochene church as a community in the process of social change in which the prototypicality of the group is likely to be in a state of flux.

The social identity theory of leadership, as applied to *Galatians* 2.1-10, suggests that Paul, as leader, is the prototypical member of the Antioch delegation in his support for a law-free gospel. Central to his law-free gospel is the belief that the Gentile believers need not be circumcised. Therefore, the contrasting out-group to which the Pauline faction compares themselves is Law-observant Judaism which lays great store on circumcision (equivalent to Out-group X in Fig. 5.1).⁸⁸ Occupying the prototypical position, Paul can be seen not to be the most extreme proponent of the law-free gospel (as C is not the most extreme proponent in Fig. 5.1) for then he would become less typical of the group as a whole. This less than extreme stance of Paul can be seen when, in the *Letter to the Galatians*, Paul calls on the Galatians not to use their freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence (*Gal.* 5.13). Paul advocates a law-free gospel but preaches self-restraint too. A similar example of Paul's prototypical position can be gleaned from *1 Corinthians* where it seems some more extreme members are arguing that 'All things are lawful' (*1 Cor.* 6.12; 10.23). They are reprimanded by Paul who reminds them that 'not all things are beneficial'. Paul's stance on a law-free gospel does not allow him to advocate total freedom or that 'everything is lawful'. If he did, he would certainly be defining himself positively in comparison with the out-group of Law-observant Judaism but he would become an atypical/extreme member of the in-group as a whole.

⁸⁸ It can be seen that the out-group for Paul is Law-observant Judaism by the derogatory and stereotypical way in which he refers to his opponents - 'false brothers' in *Gal.* 2.4, hypocritical in *Gal.* 2.13, those who are circumcised not obeying the Law in *Gal.* 6.13 and his wish that the circumcisers would castrate themselves in *Gal.* 5.12.

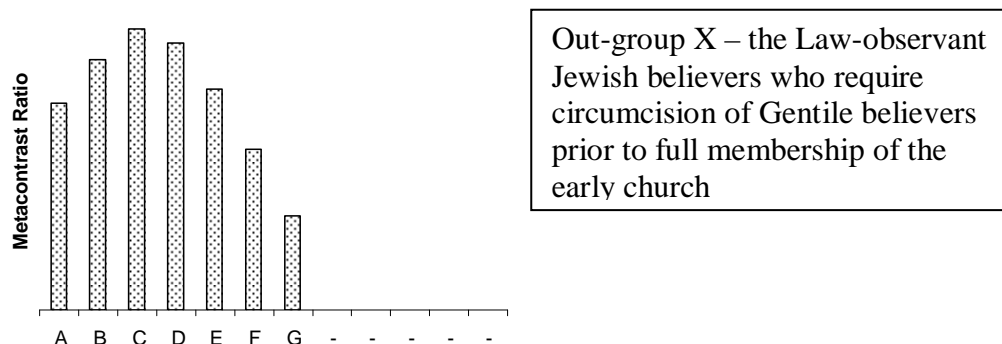


Figure 5.1 Early church members (A-G) are compared to the out-group which does not accept Gentile believers without circumcision.

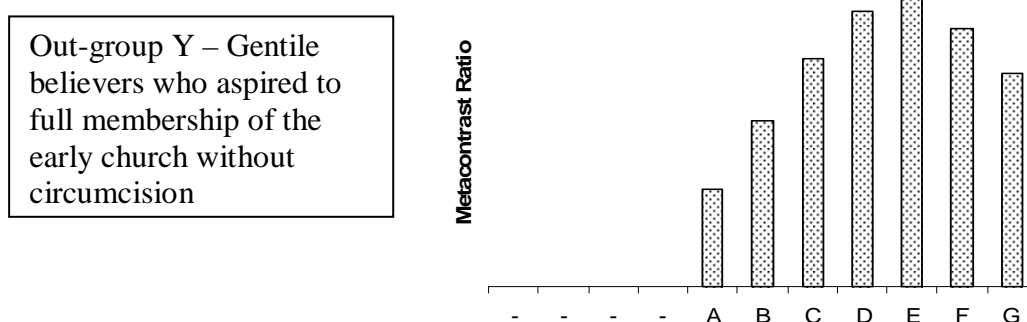


Figure 5.2 Early church members are compared to an out-group which accepts Gentile believers as full members without circumcision

As long as Paul's law-free gospel is approved by the Jerusalem church, he remains prototypical of the Antiochene faction and hence is able to retain his position of leadership (position C in Fig. 5.1). However, if the argument went against Paul and the social context changed with the Jerusalem church enforcing complete Law observance on the Gentile believers, the prototypicality of the in-group would also shift, for it could no longer define itself over and against Law-observant Judaism as the relevant out-group. The out-group with which it must then compare itself becomes the uncircumcised Gentiles (as in the change to Out-group Y in Fig. 5.2). With this shift in its self-definition, the prototypicality of the in-group changes and different members become prototypical of the in-group (as member E in Fig. 5.2). There is a move towards a position of more orthodoxy with regard to the Law and away from a position of a more law-free existence. The result of such a change would be that Paul would have

considerable difficulty in continuing as leader of the Antiochene faction, for the law-free gospel to which he is committed now makes him less prototypical of the in-group. Hence the acceptance of his law-free gospel is crucial for Paul, not only because his honour is at stake but also because his status as leader is dependent on the continued acceptance of freedom from the Law as a defining characteristic of the in-group.

In his study of Paul's *Letter to the Romans*, Esler argues that Paul uses the first person singular pronoun in chapter 7 as a way of identifying himself with the 'Israelite Christ-believers', so, according to Social Categorization and Self-Identification Theory, placing himself in a position to assume leadership as an exemplar of the group.⁸⁹

He is able to speak to them, to lead them, because he shares this identity with them.⁹⁰

If Esler is correct in this interpretation, then a similar case might be brought for Paul's personalizing the verdict of the Jerusalem Conference in *Galatians* 2.6. That 'those reckoned to be something' added nothing to him (ἐμοὶ γὰρ οἱ δοκοῦντες οὐδὲν προσανέθεντο) might well emphasize Paul's identification with all those who followed *his* gospel so re-establishing his credentials, as prototypical of the in-group, to act as their leader.

5.3.3 Galatians 2.7-9

In the previous sections I have discussed the implications of Titus's lack of circumcision and Paul's claim that nothing was added to his gospel. Both have implications for the Gentile believers at Antioch but can also be regarded as specific references to Titus and Paul as leaders. The main finding of the Jerusalem Conference, which refers directly to the Antiochene church, seems to be reported by Paul in verses 7-9. This is that two missions have been recognised by the Conference: one mission to the circumcised/Jews and a second mission to the uncircumcised/Gentiles. Most commentators agree that here Paul seem to be quoting an outside source – some recognized formula derived from the Jerusalem meeting.⁹¹ The arguments for this assumption are linguistic in origin for verses

⁸⁹ Esler, 2003, p 23.

⁹⁰ Esler, 2003, p 242.

⁹¹ So, for example, Betz, 1979, pp 96-98 and 100-101; Dunn, 1993, pp 105-106; Howard, 1990, pp 31-33; Wedderburn, 2004, p 107; Longenecker, 1990, p 55; McLean, 1991, p 74. Martyn (1997, pp 202-204) argues that the formula is the adoption of an earlier formula originating from the time of Paul's earlier visit to Peter (*Gal.* 1.18). Lüdemann (1984, pp 65-71) also claims that verses 7 and 8 represent an earlier formulation which was known to the Galatians but the verse 9 reflects the outcome of the Conference.

7 and 8 of *Galatians* 2 are the only places within the authentic Pauline corpus where Πέτρος rather than Κηφᾶς is used.⁹² Also the terms ‘gospel of circumcision’ and ‘of uncircumcision’ (*Gal.* 2.7) are regarded as non-Pauline,⁹³ and seem to contradict Paul’s own assertion that there is only one gospel (*Gal.* 1.6-8).⁹⁴ Thus the Jerusalem Conference appears to have settled on two spheres of evangelization as a means of resolving the disputes which had arisen over the entry of Gentile converts into the early church.

However, if there is agreement over the conclusions of the Jerusalem meeting, there is less agreement among commentators over the meaning of these conclusions. There has been much debate as to whether the two missions were to be geographically or ethnically based. Burton, arguing from the normal usage of εἰς (v 9), concludes that the division was ‘territorial rather than racial’.⁹⁵ In contrast Betz deduces an ethnic division as the normal usage of ἔθνος refers to a people rather than a territory.⁹⁶ As Taylor points out, neither a totally geographical nor ethnic division seems likely, for the Jerusalem meeting was itself called to consider the situation in Antioch, which was a mixed Jewish and Gentile church in the Diaspora.⁹⁷ More recent commentators have also been reluctant to define the two missions either completely ethnically or geographically. Holmberg sees the division as theological rather than ‘sociological-legal’.⁹⁸ Some writers interpret the two missions as a sharing of responsibility, with Paul and Barnabas being responsible for, and acting on behalf of, the Gentile converts whereas Peter, James and John would be responsible for and act on behalf of the Jewish believers.⁹⁹ While this interpretation would solve the geographic/ethnic debate, it does seem inconsistent with the fact that the Jerusalem meeting appears to have been called to resolve an actual situation in Antioch –

⁹² Κηφᾶς is used four times in *Galatians* (1.18; 2.11, 19) and four times in *1 Corinthians* (1.12; 3.22; 9.5; 15.5).

⁹³ According to Betz, 1979, p 97 also Dunn, 1993, p 105.

⁹⁴ Wedderburn, 2004, p 107.

⁹⁵ Burton, 1921, p 98.

⁹⁶ Betz, 1979, p 78, pp 100-101 and Witherington (1998a, p 141) also argues that the term is ethnic not territorial. Martyn (1997, pp 213-216) suggests an ethnic interpretation based on the evidence in the rest of the Pauline corpus.

⁹⁷ Taylor, 1992, pp 113-115. Lüdemann (1984, pp 72-75) similarly argues that any division on geographical or ethnic grounds was not possible as it would have disrupted the usual life of Jewish and Gentile Christians which has been unproblematic at Antioch up to that point.

⁹⁸ Holmberg, 1978, p 32.

⁹⁹ Dunn (1993, p 111) and Wedderburn (2004, pp 108-109) both argue that the absence of a verb in Paul’s formulation demands the insertion of the verb ‘to be’ rather than ‘to go’ which implies responsibility rather than destination or jurisdiction. Georgi (1992, p 32) also argues for responsibility based on other uses of εἰς in the Pauline corpus and Koine Greek.

a problem of a mixed Jewish and Gentile church.¹⁰⁰ Who, in the case of Antioch, takes responsibility for a church which consists of both Jewish and Gentile believers? Witherington, also recognising the difficulties of either an ethnic or geographic division, suggests the acceptance that considerable overlap occurred, with the division referring to ‘the major focus and purpose of their respective ministries’.¹⁰¹ Taylor suggests a compromise solution such that

the Jerusalem conference agreed that the two churches would adhere to the gospel as they understood it, and neither would attempt to impose its views on the other. This would apply both to their lives and to their mission, and their diversity of belief and practice would be maintained within the *κοινωνία* that had been affirmed at the conference.¹⁰²

This idea of mutual tolerance and acceptance of the identity of the opposing subgroup fits well with the theories of group processes reviewed in the previous chapter but still leaves unresolved the practical problems of Jewish and Gentile believers belonging to the same community. Even more appropriate is Betz’s conclusion.

The division of labor is necessary because of the cultural barriers between Jews and Gentiles, not because of a disunity in the understanding of God, his redemption of mankind, and the gospel of Jesus Christ. The formula also reflects a historic compromise which had to be made. It was *not* possible to preserve the unity of the church.¹⁰³

This short review of the previous interpretations of the ‘two missions’ formula of *Gal. 2.7-9* demonstrates the difficulty of understanding the actual verdict of the Jerusalem Conference. This difficulty is mirrored by the difficulty facing the Conference itself. The Conference seems to have originated from the protests of Law-observant Jewish believers who insisted that circumcision and full Torah observance were necessary for membership of the early church. The position of the Law-observant Jewish believers has been covered more fully previously (pp 181f). Thus the ‘false

¹⁰⁰ This can be deduced from the reference to Titus’s lack of circumcision (*Gal. 2.3*) and Paul’s antagonism towards those ‘false brothers’ who wanted to take away the freedom of Paul and his associates (*Gal. 2.4*). These represent practical problems and solutions not spheres of responsibility or jurisdiction.

¹⁰¹ Witherington, 1998a, p 141, also Georgi, 1992, p 32.

¹⁰² Taylor, 1992, p 115.

¹⁰³ Betz, 1979, pp 100-101.

brothers' who spied on Paul and his colleagues wanted to enslave them – a reference which is presumed to refer to Torah observance (*Gal.* 2.4);¹⁰⁴ there were some men who went down from Judea to Antioch and insisted that the Gentile believers be circumcised 'according to the Law of Moses' (*Acts* 15.1); the Pharisees also believed that the Gentile believers needed to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses (*Acts* 15.5). In opposition, the Pauline faction (whose stance has been covered previously at section 5.2.1 pp 177ff) insisted that circumcision for the Gentile believers was unnecessary for, if salvation depended on circumcision and Torah observance, then Christ's life and death were in vain (*Gal.* 2.21; 5.1), and the gift of the Spirit came through faith not obeying the Law (*Gal.* 3.2, 14).¹⁰⁵ The aim of the Conference was to reconcile these opposing positions. Indeed some commentators argue that the task of the Conference was impossible and that there was no way in which the early church (still a sect within Judaism) could accept Gentile believers as members without circumcision. Watson, in his earlier work, describes the narrative in chapter 2 of *Galatians* as 'thoroughly tendentious'.¹⁰⁶ He maintains that the Jewish leaders at the Conference could not possibly have accepted 'the legitimacy of the principle of freedom from the law', for this would have undermined their own mission to the Jews, as 'non-Christians Jews would be unlikely to accept the proclamation of people who had thrown off the yoke of the Torah'.¹⁰⁷ Sim, likewise, argues that such a decision would have been detrimental to the mission to the Jews.¹⁰⁸ He also points out that, based on Josephus's account of the death of James (*Jewish Antiquities* 20.200-204), James was apparently renowned for his own Law observance and unlikely to condone abandoning Torah observance for anyone. In *Gal.* 2.1-10, Paul exaggerates the extent to which his own gospel was accepted by the Jerusalem leaders knowing that the Galatians were unlikely to know the truth.¹⁰⁹ While accepting that the verdict of 'two missions' which did not include circumcision for the Gentile believers is extraordinary, it seems even more unlikely that the Galatians were not in a position to verify the truth of Paul's statements for they were being visited by the 'agitators' who appear to have had knowledge of Paul and his dealings with Jerusalem.

¹⁰⁴ Dunn, 1993, p 99; Longenecker, 1990, p 52; Esler, 1998, p 131; Betz, 1979, p 91.

¹⁰⁵ Paul also argues that Abraham's justification by God came before he was circumcised (*Gal.* 3.8-14; *Rom.* 4.9-16).

¹⁰⁶ Watson, 1986, p 54.

¹⁰⁷ Watson, 1986, p 53.

¹⁰⁸ Sim, 1998, p 86.

¹⁰⁹ Sim, 1998, pp 86-88.

In this case Paul could not have risked being discovered as a liar in his arguments; he had previously stressed the validity of his account (*Gal.* 1.20). Paul's account of the decision to pursue two missions must, therefore, be accepted as true.

The problem facing the Jerusalem Conference was to satisfy both the Pauline faction, with its insistence on the authenticity of Gentile believers remaining as Gentiles, and the Law-observant Jewish faction, who maintained that total conformity with the Torah was necessary for salvation. Their solution appears to have been the 'two missions'. The understanding gained from models derived from Group Identity and Self-categorization Theories suggests that maintaining pluralism by affirming the identity of both subgroups within the superordinate grouping of the early church was likely to provide the most satisfactory solution. The 'two missions' solution would appear to do that by retaining a distinction between Jewish and Gentile believers. The principal problem, however, with maintaining pluralism within the early church was that the Jewish identity was defined over and against the Gentiles as the appropriate out-group with whom comparisons should be made.¹¹⁰ The Law-observant Jewish identity was delineated by its difference from Gentiles in its monotheism, food laws, circumcision and ethical behaviour. The Gentile believers would, no doubt, now have accepted monotheism, ethical behaviour and some food laws, but they were still uncircumcised and probably did not abide as strictly to the food laws as Law-observant Jews (as in *1 Cor.* 8.1-10). Yet even allowing for suitable changes in the behaviour of Gentile believers, the stereotype of the 'Gentile sinner' (*Gal.* 2.15) would still be active in the minds of law-abiding Jews.¹¹¹

Furthermore, as has been argued earlier (sections 4.4. and 4.5), it is likely that some Gentile believers were beginning to exercise influence, and even leadership roles,

¹¹⁰ This is very evident in the Gospel of Matthew. So *Mt.* 5.47 'And if you greet only your brothers and sisters,¹ what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?'; *Mt.* 6.7 'When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words'; *Mt.* 6.31-31 'Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.'

Neusner (2005, p 277) appreciates this as he says 'they [Gentiles] stand for different things; they form a counterpart and opposite of Israel'.

Also Donaldson (1997, p 75) says 'At every point, Israel's covenantal self-understanding is defined over against the nations: Israel's God is no mere local deity, but the one true God, sovereign over all things, including all the nations ... Implicit in every facet of Israel's self-identifying narrative, then, is a counter assertion of one kind or another about the Gentile nations. Jews could not consider themselves without at the same time considering their relationship with non-Jews'.

¹¹¹ A general discussion of stereotyping is given previously and some examples have been listed (see pp 83ff).

within the church at Antioch. Law-observant Jewish believers could possibly have been prepared to accept Gentile believers under similar terms to which Judaism accepted 'sympathizers' (as adherents to some Jewish observances or as benefactors) but to acknowledge Gentiles as leaders of the community would be more problematic. As the previous socio-psychological analysis of leadership has shown (section 2.5.2 pp 66ff), successful leaders of groups in which group identity is important need to be prototypical of the group as a whole. It would be extremely difficult for 'orthodox', circumcised Jewish believers to accept uncircumcised believers as legitimate leaders over the Law-observant factions within the early church, even if these leaders presided over the Antiochene church rather than that at Jerusalem.

Therefore, as both Sim and Watson have noted,¹¹² it is impossible to believe that the Jerusalem Conference simply accepted uncircumcised believers into the early church on equal terms with Jewish believers. Some provision needed to be made for Law-observant Jewish believers to preserve their Jewish identity by maintaining the traditional boundaries between Jews and Gentiles. To have neglected to provide this provision would have risked schism. Seeman, quoted above (pp 192ff), has shown how resistant religious attitudes can be to change and to adaptation to changing situations. Sani and his colleagues have investigated how the threat to religious beliefs and practices can result in schism when the more hard line adherents understand their identity to be threatened, the very existence of their religious institution to be in jeopardy and themselves to be voiceless to oppose the changes (see above pp 101ff). The 'two missions' must, consequently, have included some concessions and provision for the Law-observant Jewish believers to exist in accordance with their own beliefs. To do less would have exposed the early church to the risk of serious schism. Reconciliation could only be accomplished by allowing the Law-observant Jews to retain their separateness from Gentile believers (at least partly) so as to maintain their Jewish identity. It appears that there had already been a similar separation of subgroups to reconcile a previous ethnic dispute between the Hebrews and Hellenists (*Acts* 6.1-6, see above pp 93ff). There the ethnic dispute was resolved by giving the Hellenists their own leadership separate from that of the Hebrews. A similar division seems implicit in the agreement of the Jerusalem Conference – 'we to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised' (*Gal.* 2.9). However, the division cannot be seen as operating purely on ethnic grounds, for the

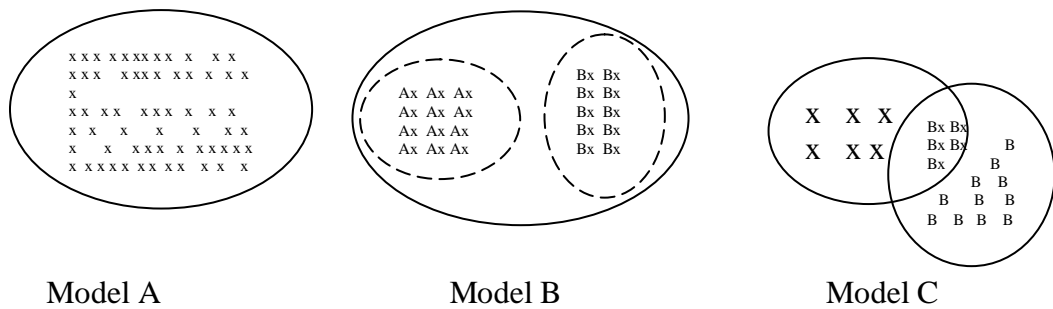
¹¹² Watson, 1986, pp 53-54); Sim, 1998, pp 86-88.

principal leaders of the mission to the Gentiles were Jews (Paul and Barnabas) and the Antiochene Jews seemed to have mixed amicably with Gentile believers before the appearance of the ‘people from James’.¹¹³ The Jerusalem Conference could not, therefore, have demanded that the Gentile believers be full members of the early church on condition that they existed as a separate entity and did not mix with *any* Jewish believers. A strict ethnic separation was not possible in a Diaspora community such as Antioch.

A more likely solution would seem to involve a compromise by which those Law-observant Jewish believers, who considered their identity as Jews to be threatened by extensive contact with Gentile believers and/or the acceptance of Gentile believers as leaders within the early church, could continue to exist as members of the Jesus movement. Their requirement would be to continue as members of the Jesus movement but also remain within Judaism under circumstances which did not threaten their Jewish identity. Thus their contact with Gentile believers should not be significantly greater than that normally experienced by Law-observant Jews with Gentile ‘sympathizers’ in the synagogues and they would not be subjected to Gentile leadership over them. As these Law-observant Jewish believers were more likely to be found in Palestine, where Jews formed the majority, than in the Diaspora where more frequent contact with Gentiles was common because Jews were in the minority, the mission to ‘the circumcised’ would be conducted mainly in Palestine from Jerusalem where the ‘pillars’ lived. The mission to the Gentiles (and those Jews who exhibited a more tolerant approach to contact with Gentiles), on the other hand, would be concentrated in the Diaspora. Yet the division of the two missions could not take place along geographical lines, as the Antioch dispute (*Gal.* 2.11-14) demonstrates. Here Peter, a Palestinian Jew, was initially happy to enter into intimate table fellowship with Gentile believers but later, along with Barnabas and the Antiochene Jews (i.e. Diaspora Jews) withdrew from this contact. Thus, a concession must have existed for any Jewish believer, whether in Palestine or the Diaspora, who experienced a conscientious objection to excessive contact with Gentile believers or leadership by Gentile believers, to be at liberty to withdraw from such a mixed Jewish/Gentile community whilst remaining members of the Jesus movement, so retaining their Jewish identity intact.

¹¹³ So also Sim, 1998, p 85, ‘And would the Jewish authorities, if they clearly advocated a separation of Jew and Gentile, have permitted Jews by race such as Paul and Barnabas to conduct the law-free mission to the Gentiles? Surely they would have insisted that Gentile-Christians conduct this mission’.

I propose, therefore, that the ‘two missions’ settlement was not a division along ethnic or geographical grounds, but a division between those who regarded their Jewish identity to be threatened by close contact with, or leadership by, Gentile believers and those, both Jews and Gentiles, who experienced no threat to their identity by such Jewish/Gentile interactions. In terms of the models described in Chapter 2, the application of dual identity (Model B) would most effectively answer the demands of the Law-observant Jewish faction. Here, the superordinate group is introduced while maintaining the original in-group and out-group categorization.¹¹⁴ Thus the Law-observant Jewish faction would retain their identity as Jews (B) within the superordinate Jesus movement (x); similarly the Gentile believers would retain their identity of uncircumcision (A) whilst also being members of the Jesus movement (x).



But, as pointed out previously (section 2.6.2.3), dual identity works best when the subgroups are equal in number and power. The perception of power and influence is a highly sensitive area. If a previous out-group exerts disproportionate influence within the superordinate group, it can be perceived by the original in-group as taking over the superordinate group. There is also the danger that the majority subgroup will continue to push for complete assimilation of the minority subgroup.¹¹⁵ This can be seen in the continued efforts of some Jews to persuade the Gentiles to conform to Judaism and accept circumcision in Philippi and Galatia (*Phil.* 3.2-3; *Gal.* 5.3-6). The leadership of the superordinate groups and the individual subgroups is decisive. Unbalanced representation of leadership from any subgroup may be perceived as influencing decision-making in favour of one particular subgroup and thus being unfair. Under-represented subgroup members can feel threatened.¹¹⁶ In the next chapter I shall argue

¹¹⁴ Gaertner and Dovidio, 2000, pp 155-183.

¹¹⁵ Hornsey and Hogg, 2000a, pp 149-150.

¹¹⁶ Hornsey and Hogg, 2000a, pp 150-151.

that it was this undermining of the status of the Gentile believers at Antioch which angered Paul so much that he left the community completely.

The dual identity solution would mean that, in principle the ‘pillars’ accepted the Gentile believers as full members of the early church alongside Jewish believers but the decision left ambiguities regarding the practice of the Law and salvation. The ‘two missions’ solution may have resolved the identity issues relating to unconventional contact with Gentiles and the possibility of Gentile leadership of some early church communities but the issue of the importance of the Law to salvation remained and was to surface again in Philippi and Galatia (*Phil.* 3.2-3; *Gal.* 5.3-6). Difficulties also arose over the more practical problem of maintaining a unified church with these two separate missions and these surfaced relatively quickly at Antioch (*Gal.* 2.11-14).

5.4 Conclusions

In this chapter I have argued that the main decision of the Jerusalem Conference was the ‘two missions’ pronouncement. The lack of insistence on circumcision for Titus (*Gal.* 2.3) and the acceptance of Paul’s gospel without adding anything (*Gal.* 2.6) to it confirmed that the Gentiles could be full members of the early church communities without obeying the Torah. However, these pronouncements also had implications for both Titus’s and Paul’s roles as leaders. The verdict relating most directly to the problem of Gentile believers in the church was the ‘two missions’. Exactly what the ‘two missions’ pronouncement meant is somewhat obscure. To explore this meaning further, some of the inferences derived from models based on Group Identity and Self-categorization Theories have been used.

Socio-psychological investigations into group process have indicated that maintaining the identity of individual groups is the solution most likely to succeed when distinct groupings attempt to form a united superordinate group. Using these insights in the analysis of the Jerusalem Conference described by Paul in *Galatians* 2.1-10 suggests that a compromise solution was the only possible decision. The two subgroups, the Pauline faction who insisted that the Gentiles were acceptable group members as Gentiles and the Law-observant Jewish believers who continued to demand circumcision for full membership of the early church as a sect within Judaism, held opposing stances which could not be reconciled. The verdict of the Conference was that Gentiles need not

be circumcised and that Paul's law-free gospel was accepted as suitable for Gentile believers. However, this decision brought problems for Law-observant Jewish believers whose identity was totally bound up with their Jewishness. To insist on untraditional contact with Gentiles and/or accepting Gentile believers as leaders of the early church communities crossed the boundaries which delineated what it was to be a Jew. Provision, therefore, had to be made for those Jews who experienced a threat to their identity as Jews by such unorthodox contact with Gentiles. This chapter has put forward the argument that the compromise was the 'two missions' by which Law-observant Jewish believers need not be exposed to abnormal contact with Gentile believers. They were given the option to retain their identity remaining within the normal boundaries of Judaism yet remain members of the early church. The test of the 'two missions' solution came with the arrival of Peter and the people from James at Antioch. It is the Antioch Dispute to which I now move.

The Antioch Dispute

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I argued that the Jerusalem Conference reached a compromise solution which allowed both the Gentile and Law-observant Jewish believers to retain their identity by occupying subgroups in the superordinate grouping of the Jesus movement. In principle the solution seems to have been acceptable to all sides. Paul appears to boast that the ‘pillars’ extended the hand of fellowship (*Gal.* 2.9) and accepted the mission of Paul and Barnabas to the Gentiles (*Gal.* 2.8-9) and there is no mention of a threatened schism by which any Jewish believers considered leaving the Jesus movement in either *Galatians* or *Acts*. Yet even though the solution was acceptable in principle, it was to be tested in practice at Antioch. As I argued in the initial chapter (see p 2), Paul links the Jerusalem Conference with the Antioch dispute and links them by way of contrast; the Jerusalem Conference met with Paul’s approval but not the events at Antioch; whereas the Jerusalem Conference seemed to end amicably in agreement, the dispute at Antioch was confrontational with Paul opposing Peter to his face.

So far in this thesis I have focused on the social psychology of group dynamics. However, much of the work in this area has concentrated on the factors which unite groups and the strategies which maintain the cohesion of groups.¹ As the Antioch dispute involved conflict which, apparently, resulted in a split between Paul and the Antioch church, these studies are of limited use. In this chapter, therefore, I shall apply some of the insights of Sani and his co-workers regarding groups in schismatic situations to the situation at Antioch. I shall also utilize aspects of the challenge-and-response pattern of social interactions which was first developed by Bourdieu,² and developed by Malina and Esler and which, it is claimed, is particularly relevant to the ancient Mediterranean world.³ This pattern of challenge and response seems to accord well with the confrontation between Peter and Paul described in *Galatians* (2.10-14).

¹ The exception to this is the work of Sani and his co-workers.

² Bourdieu, 1965.

³ Malina, 1993, pp 34-45; Esler, 1994, pp 27-29.

6.2 Paul's Account of the Antioch Dispute in Galatians

The events surrounding the Antioch dispute (*Gal.* 2.11-14) and the preceding Jerusalem Conference (*Gal.* 2.1-10) have intrigued New Testament scholars over recent decades.⁴ The interest is stimulated by a number of different factors.

- Paul, in the *Letter to the Galatians*, is angry and is writing in a polemical style. Although Paul's account is the only version of the incident, his report may not be totally trustworthy.⁵ His account of the incident is also very brief, leaving much unsaid.
- Paul is writing of the Antioch dispute as a means of emphasizing his own point of view with regard to the current situation in Galatia. He, therefore, has his own agenda and he is likely to bias the facts of the conflict at Antioch to support his present argument with the Galatians.⁶
- There are interesting ambiguities in the attitudes and behaviour of the principal characters. In *Galatians* 2.1-10, Paul appears satisfied with the outcome of the Jerusalem Conference; the 'pillars' have accepted that the grace of God was at work in Paul's mission to the Gentiles (*Gal.* 2.8) and have extended the right hand of fellowship to him and Barnabas (*Gal.* 2.9). In contrast, at Antioch, Paul obviously thinks that Peter and the rest of the Antiochene Jews have somehow reneged on the agreement and are acting hypocritically by withdrawing from table fellowship (*Gal.* 2.11, 14). The fact that it is Paul, and Paul alone, who harbours this belief indicates strongly that his objections may not be as convincing as he himself would like to think. There must have been some validity in the arguments of 'the people from James', for they seem to convince Peter, the Antiochene Jews and even Barnabas – the co-apostle to the Gentiles with Paul – that their behaviour went beyond that previously agreed as acceptable. On the other hand, the table fellowship that occurred at Antioch prior to the coming of the 'people from James' could not have been so

⁴ For example Dunn, 1990, pp 129-83 and 1993, pp 116-31; Esler, 1994, pp 52-70 and 1998, pp 92-140; Holmberg, 1998; Sanders, 1990a; Slee, 2003, pp 36-53; Taylor, 1992; Watson, 1986, pp 49-72; Zetterholm, 2003, pp 129-77.

⁵ One example of this is that Paul accuses Peter of 'compelling' the Gentile to 'judaize' by simply withdrawing from table fellowship.

⁶ For example, he is anxious to demonstrate his independence of Jerusalem (*Gal.* 1) and also downplays the contribution of Barnabas to the Jerusalem Conference (compare *Gal.* 2.1 with 2.9).

abhorrent to an ‘average’ Jew, for the Antiochene Jews, Barnabas, Paul and even Peter appear to have entered into it easily and willingly.

- The dispute concerned table fellowship (*Gal.* 2.11-12), but exactly what the practice was is problematic except that, at first, it seemed acceptable to the Jews of Antioch then later became so objectionable to them that not even Paul’s protestations could reverse their decision to withdraw from table fellowship with Gentile believers.⁷

6.3 Previous Explanations of the Antioch Dispute

The one certainty concerning the Antioch dispute is that it involved Jewish believers engaging in table fellowship with Gentile believers in some way (*Gal.* 2.12). But the explanations accounting for the Antioch dispute are many and varied. The fact that scholars are still working on the topic indicates that none of the preceding explanations has proved completely satisfactory.

Esler offers the most extreme explanation. He maintains that table fellowship between Jews and Gentiles was impossible in the first century CE. He proposes that there was a complete ban within Judaism on Jewish/Gentile table fellowship.⁸ Gentiles were ritually impure and, by close contact with them, Jews incurred this impurity.⁹ His argument is also based on the ever present danger of idolatry for any Jews sharing table fellowship of any kind with Gentiles. Even when the commensality resulted from Jewish hospitality, such that all food and drink were guaranteed to be kosher, Esler argues that the possibility of a Gentile offering a libation of wine or other liquid would render table fellowship impossible.¹⁰ The practice of sharing the one cup at a Eucharistic meal would be impossible for any Law-observant Jew. Thus the ‘people from James’ came to Antioch to demand totally separate table fellowship from the Jews. He attempts to account for the apparent acceptance of uncircumcised Gentiles at the Jerusalem Conference by supposing that the agreement was not valid for Peter, James and John because, as Jews, an agreement was sealed, not by a hand shake which was the Roman way, but with an oath.¹¹

⁷ It is generally agreed that Paul lost the argument at Antioch for he would certainly have included any victory in his *Letter to the Galatians*, so Watson, 1986, p 56; Esler, 1987, p 87; Dunn, 1990, p 160; Taylor, 1992, p 137; Dunn, 1993, p 150.

⁸ Esler, 1998, p 93.

⁹ Esler, 1987, pp 85-89.

¹⁰ Esler, 1998, p 105.

¹¹ Esler, 1995.

Esler's interpretations seem unconvincing on a number of counts. It is unlikely that Peter never meant to observe the Jerusalem agreement for he entered into table fellowship with Gentiles at Antioch readily at first (*Gal.* 2.12). Even if not sealed by an oath, Peter showed his acceptance of the agreement by his actions at Antioch. Sanders argues persuasively against a ban on Jewish/Gentile interaction and commensality. Jews did associate with Gentiles and 'there was no barrier to social intercourse with Gentiles as long as one did not eat their meat or drink their wine'.¹² There was no prohibition on Jews dining with Gentiles in Jewish homes.¹³ Sanders has shown, by citing many examples from the contemporary literature, that Jewish/Gentile interactions did take place when the meetings took place within a Jewish environment, such that the origins of food and drink were under Jewish control.¹⁴ What was problematic for a Jew was the acceptance of Gentile hospitality. In addition, most Jews were ritually impure most of the time by contact with death, blood etc. (see Chapter 5, footnote 23) but, even then, purification rites were available.¹⁵ Dunn also finds Esler's theory unpersuasive. He points out that Esler disregards the fact that the early Gentile converts were God-fearers who adhered to some basic Jewish food laws.¹⁶ It must also be remembered that it is very obvious from Paul's own writings that he, himself, did not tolerate idolatry in his churches (*Gal.* 4.4-10; 5.20; 2 *Cor.* 6.16). Although these rebukes may indicate attempts to counter idolatrous tendencies, Paul seems to oppose idolatry in Gentile believers as much as in any other Jewish believer. Even if he was prepared to turn a blind eye to the purchase of (possibly) idolatrous food from the market (*1 Cor.* 8.4-8), to participate in eating at the table of an idol was definitely forbidden for his converts (*1 Cor.* 10.14-21). Thus the risks incurred by Jewish believers enjoying commensality with Gentile believers within a Jewish environment would be much less than those with Gentile unbelievers.

Another explanation is offered by Watson, who suggests that the happenings at Antioch were outwith what had been agreed at the Jerusalem Conference. In the first edition of his book, Watson claims that the Jerusalem Conference had not condoned a circumcision-free gospel for Gentile believers but had insisted on circumcision for Gentile believers. He gives full weight to Paul's accusation to Peter that he was compelling the

¹² Sanders, 1990a, p 178.

¹³ Sanders, 1990a, pp 178-180.

¹⁴ Sanders, 1990a, pp 176-180.

¹⁵ Sanders, 1990a, p 175.

¹⁶ Dunn, 1990, pp 180-182.

Gentiles to 'judaize' (*Gal.* 2.14) Thus the 'people from James' came to enforce the Jerusalem agreement because the events at Antioch were jeopardizing the mission to the Jews in Jerusalem.¹⁷ In the second edition of *Paul, Judaism and Judaism* Watson takes another approach arguing that the Jerusalem Conference did not discuss circumcision for Gentile believers. Sim follows a similar path to Watson's first argument, concluding that the Jerusalem Conference found against Paul and Barnabas and that the 'people from James' came to enforce the Jerusalem agreement that included Gentile circumcision.¹⁸

While the theories of Watson and Sim explain the ease with which Peter and Barnabas comply with the requests of the 'people from James', they fail totally to account for the behaviour of Peter, Barnabas and Paul at Antioch prior to the appearance of the 'people from James'. Can it really be supposed that three out of the five named delegates at the Jerusalem Conference – one of them the designated apostle to the Jews - all totally ignored the findings of that Conference? Further, if Watson and Sim are correct in concluding that circumcision was demanded of Gentile believers at the Jerusalem Conference, it is difficult to believe that both Paul and Luke (*Acts* 15.6-29) could so grossly misrepresent the findings of the Conference in their separate accounts of the meeting.

If Peter, Barnabas and Paul are to be credited with any integrity, an explanation for their respective behaviour has to be found which is comprehensible in the context of the Jerusalem agreement. Burton thinks that freer practices started to creep in as a result the Jerusalem Conference.¹⁹ It would be conceivable that Paul and Barnabas, flushed with the successful outcome of the Jerusalem Conference, started to initiate customs which went beyond the actual Jerusalem agreement but could be regarded as within the spirit of the agreement.

Dunn takes this approach. After looking at the two extreme possible explanations of the conflict at Antioch – a demand for total Law observance and circumcision (Esler's position) and reaction against the total abandonment of Law observance (as proposed by Barrett)²⁰ - he argues convincingly that the evidence supports

¹⁷ Watson, 1986, pp 53-56; Martyn (1997, pp 242-243) also argues that the activities at Antioch were jeopardising the mission to the Jews.

¹⁸ Sim, 1998, pp 94-99.

¹⁹ Burton, 1921, p 105 and also Hill, 1992, p 141 and Dunn, 1993, p 117.

²⁰ Barrett, 1999b, p 54.

neither of these two extremes.²¹ On the one hand a demand for total Law observance would not be compatible with the findings of the recent Jerusalem Conference. On the other hand it seems unlikely that Peter, Barnabas and the Antiochene Jewish believers would have completely abandoned Law observance. In addition, the Gentile believers of Antioch were probably God-fearers who kept basic food laws (see pp 125ff). Dunn's explanation is that the 'people from James' had greater expectations of Torah observance than was present at Antioch. In particular, he suggests that the tithing laws had been abandoned.²² Sanders, however, argues that, although offerings and sacrifices were made by Diaspora Jews, tithing as such was not practised outside Palestine.²³ Further, all Jews were ritually impure most of the time through contact with corpses, semen, menstruation etc, so Gentile impurity was not likely to be a major difficulty.²⁴ Although Dunn's conclusion, that 'the people from James' were demanding greater purity and tithing, seems unlikely, his deduction, that what was being called for was greater strictness than the current Law observance at Antioch, is undoubtedly accurate.

Sanders, himself, argues that the 'people from James' were requiring greater strictness in the observance of the Law. He proposes that the issue at Antioch was not one particular Law but rather opposition from the 'people from James' to there being 'too much' contact with Gentiles. He also sees the message from James as addressed to Peter personally rather than the Antiochene community, because of his position as apostle to the Jews.²⁵ This objection to the degree of association rather than to a particular contravention or omission is difficult either to verify or reject. However, the responses of Peter, Barnabas, Paul and the Antiochene Jews argue against Sanders' proposal. What would be required under these circumstances would be a partial drawing back from Gentile intercourse by Peter. Yet Paul describes Peter as 'separating himself' (*Gal.* 2.12) and the other Jews followed his example (*Gal.* 2.13). Total separation from Gentile contact by all the Jews except Paul represents an extreme response to a criticism of 'too much' contact by Peter. In addition, the demands for less Gentile contact, if addressed solely to him, may have persuaded Peter, as a Jerusalem Jew with special responsibility for the mission to the

²¹ Dunn, 1993, p 121 and 1990, pp 151-158.

²² Dunn, 1990, p 154.

²³ Sanders, 1990b, p 171.

²⁴ Sanders (1990b, p 270 and 1990a, pp 173-175) claims Diaspora Jews were permanently impure and could only be purified by pilgrimage to the Temple but did perform some ritual washings before worship and prayer.

²⁵ Sanders, 1990a, p 186.

Jews, but were unlikely to have influenced the Antiochene Jews and especially Barnabas, the designated co-apostle to the Gentiles with Paul.

Taylor relates the Antioch dispute to the situation of the mother church in Jerusalem. Taylor argues that ‘too much’ contact with Gentile believers was endangering the mother church in the deteriorating political situation in Jerusalem.²⁶ However, the evidence for such deterioration between 48-52 CE (i.e. between the Jerusalem Conference and the Antioch dispute) is not totally convincing. Events such as the crisis over attempts by Caligula to erect his statue in the Temple (40 CE), Roman interference with the High Priest (44-46 CE), the execution of the sons of Judas the Galilean (46-48 CE)²⁷ and the rise in the Zealot movement,²⁸ occurred before the Jerusalem Conference (at which the ‘pillars’ accepted his gospel and offered him ‘the right hand of fellowship’ - *Gal.* 2.7-9) which took place around 49 CE. The Antioch dispute is normally dated about 52 CE or earlier²⁹ so that, if an altered political climate was the cause of the change in attitude at Antioch, it must be ascribed to events occurring between 48-52 CE. There were riots between Jews and Samaritans in Palestine and between Jews and Greeks in Alexandria around 50-52 CE³⁰ but these seem to have been spasmodic. Reicke dates the main increase in Zealotism in Palestine between 54-66 CE when Nero became Emperor.³¹ Goodman postulates increased nationalism occurred even later, contending that the ‘slide into war was rapid and dramatic’, with the rise of Zealotism and the tensions prior to the Jewish War unlikely to have started before 60 CE.³² Recent commentators question the influence of the Jewish War on events at Antioch.³³ Sim doubts whether, in the heightened nationalism in Jerusalem, happenings in the Diaspora would have concerned Palestinian Jews at all.³⁴ In addition, Holmberg argues against Taylor that Taylor has no textual justification for assuming that an agreement by both parties to safeguard the security of the Jerusalem church was part of the Jerusalem Conference (Taylor bases this assertion of the reference

²⁶ Taylor, 1992, p 130.

²⁷ Dunn, 1990, p 133.

²⁸ Jewett, 1971, pp 204-205; Bruce, 1982, p 131; Longenecker, 1990, p 74.

²⁹ Hengel and Schwemer, 1997, p xiii. Dunn (Dunn 1990, pp 130, 163 n6) speculates a period as short as a few months between the Jerusalem meeting and Antioch dispute because of Paul’s ὅτε δέ link to the incident.

³⁰ Reicke, 1984, p 148.

³¹ Reicke (1984, p 149) does attribute the Antioch dispute to increased Zealot movements but dates the dispute later at around 54 CE and equivalent to Paul’s Antioch visit in *Acts* 18.

³² Goodman, 1987, p 152.

³³ Hill, 1992, p 130; Sim, 1998, p 93.

³⁴ Sim, 1998, p 97.

to ‘remembering the poor’ in *Gal. 2.10*).³⁵ Taylor also proposes that the separation in Jewish/Gentile commensality was intended to be temporary,³⁶ existing only for the duration of the visit of the ‘people from James’. This is certainly compatible with Paul’s accusation of hypocrisy and is something I shall return to later in this chapter.

Holmberg proposes that the Antioch dispute arose from the extension of ‘restricted commensality’, in which Jewish/Gentile table fellowship occurred solely within a Jewish environment, to ‘indiscriminate commensality’ in which Jews accepted hospitality from Gentile households.³⁷ To the more Torah-observant ‘people from James’, this blurred the boundaries between Jews and Gentiles and threatened Jewish identity.³⁸ Thus the ‘people from James’ came to enforce the agreement reached at the Jerusalem Conference - that there should be ‘separation of the Christian community at Antioch into two commensality groups, one for Jews and one for Gentiles’.³⁹

Holmberg’s proposal certainly meets the criterion of being comprehensible in the aftermath of the Jerusalem Conference. It is conceivable that the findings of the Conference – that Gentile believers need not be circumcised or Torah-observant – could lead to a more liberal form of interaction between Jews and Gentiles. If commensality had previously been of a restricted nature, taking place within a Jewish environment, which, so Holmberg and Sanders suggest, provided no threat to Law-observant Jews, it is plausible that, after the Jerusalem Conference, Jewish believers felt able to accept invitations from Gentile households. However, it is more difficult to rationalize Holmberg’s suggestion that the ‘people from James’ arrived to effect a ‘separation of the Christian community at Antioch into two commensality groups, one for Jews and one for Gentiles’.⁴⁰ Holmberg, agreeing with Sanders, sees no problem with ‘restricted commensality’, and goes so far as to say that ‘restricted commensality was a social fact in first century Judaism’.⁴¹ The obvious solution to the objections of the ‘people from James’ was to return to the ‘restricted commensality’ which had operated prior to the new initiatives taken after the

³⁵ Holmberg, 1998, pp 412-413.

³⁶ Taylor, 1992, p 136.

³⁷ Holmberg, 1998, p 405 but Dunn (1993, p 121), Hill (1992, p 140) and Zetterholm (2003, pp 160-161) also suggests this possibility.

³⁸ Holmberg, 1998, pp 404-407.

³⁹ Holmberg, 1998, p 410.

⁴⁰ Holmberg, 1998, p 410.

⁴¹ Holmberg, 1998, p 404.

Jerusalem Conference. In this way church unity would not have been threatened. Yet Holmberg is correct in reiterating at this point the findings of the Jerusalem Conference which, according to Paul, did seem to propose some sort of separation. Astutely Holmberg recognises that commensality has a social dimension – ‘it kept people in their places’.⁴² ‘Restricted commensality’, for a Jew, meant retaining the boundaries which defined what it was to be Jewish. But it also had social consequences for Gentiles. Gentiles may well have enjoyed the hospitality of Jewish believers but, so long as they were unable to return that hospitality, they occupied a position of inferiority within the early church. ‘Restricted commensality’ kept Gentiles in their place. Therefore, for division to have been preferable to returning to ‘restricted commensality’, other issues must be involved and, I shall suggest, these issues involved the status of Gentiles.

Zetterholm also goes along the path of reciprocal commensality in his interpretation of the Antioch dispute. Like Holmberg, he views commensality outwith a Jewish environment as the most likely cause of the conflict at Antioch.⁴³ His explanation of the dispute is that the status of the Gentiles within the early church was interpreted differently by Paul and James and his people. James, following the prevailing ideas of his time, allowed the association of Gentiles with the early church along the same lines as the association of god-fearers with Judaism. Paul, on the other hand, granted the Gentiles complete equality. Paul’s belief - that the church now existed in the eschaton - meant the Gentile believers were incorporated fully into the covenant which provided salvation for all within it. But they were incorporated as Gentiles not as Jews, for how else could God be the God of both Jews and Gentiles?⁴⁴

There is much with which I agree in Zetterholm’s interpretation of the Antioch dispute. For both Holmberg and Zetterholm, reciprocal commensality seems the most likely cause of the conflict. I agree with Zetterholm that the underlying issue is the differences in the understanding of the status of Gentiles within the early church. However, Zetterholm’s explanation may be too simplistic. The eschatological inclusion of Gentiles in the mercy of God undoubtedly played a part in Paul’s understanding but, as Sanders has explained, Paul’s theology is likely to have been a consequence of his experience rather than his theology dictating his actions; his experience was that Gentiles were equal

⁴² Holmberg, 1998, p 404.

⁴³ Zetterholm, 2003, pp 160-161.

⁴⁴ Zetterholm, 2003, pp 165-166.

recipients of the Spirit and its gifts (*Gal.* 3.2-5; *1 Cor.* 12.7-11). In addition, Zetterholm's proposal that Gentiles were now to be incorporated in the covenant as Gentiles is problematic. It is obvious that the long established covenant was no longer sufficient even for Jewish salvation 'except through faith in Christ Jesus' (*Gal.* 2.15) so the covenant itself had changed. Also the covenant, for the Jewish believers, still included circumcision, so, for the Gentiles to be included in the covenant as Gentiles, actually meant dissecting out parts of the covenant.

6.4 Reciprocity and the Jerusalem Conference

As is obvious from my comments on the various interpretations of the Antioch dispute given by other scholars, I strongly support the proposal that the conflict at Antioch arose when Jewish believers began to accept the invitations of Gentile believers to dine in their homes. This seems a likely outcome of the favourable decision regarding Gentile believers which was reached at the Jerusalem Conference. If the Jerusalem Conference accepted Gentile believers as full members of the Jesus movement, including the possibility of leadership, it is to be expected that some of the Gentile believers, probably those of moderate to high social status, extended hospitality to all the Antiochene church, perhaps including presiding at the Eucharist.⁴⁵ Before dealing with the issue of reciprocity which escalated into a hostile situation at Antioch (*Gal.* 2.10-14) it is necessary to look at the objections to Gentile hospitality for a Law-observant Jew and then to analyse the effect of the lack of reciprocity for the understanding of the status of the Gentile believers.

6.4.1 The Jews and Table-fellowship

The inability of the Gentile believers to reciprocate Jewish hospitality centred on the Jewish food laws and the fear of idolatry. To avoid eating 'unclean' foods or being exposed to food sacrificed/offered to idols, Jews generally did not risk defilement by accepting invitations from Gentiles to dine in their homes. Much of this has already been discussed in the preceding section.⁴⁶ The rare occasions on which Jews did dine with Gentiles or eat their food show the care taken by the Torah-observant Jew to maintain his purity. Daniel and his companions, when they were deported to Babylon, ate the food from the King's

⁴⁵ Esler points out (1998, p 138) that Paul never accuses Peter of breaking the Jerusalem agreement. He accuses him and the Antiochene Jews of living a lie by being inconsistent in his behaviour towards the Gentile believers.

⁴⁶ See section 1.2 of this chapter.

table but restricted themselves to eating only vegetables and drinking water so as to avoid 'unclean' foods such as meat and wine (*Daniel* 1.8-14). Judith, as she set out to dine with and then slaughter Holofernes, took her own food and wine to eat at the table (*Judith* 10.5; 12.19). Esther, during her time as queen, claims not to have 'drunk the wine of libations' (*Esther* 14.17),⁴⁷ although this does not seem to mean that she never ate at the table of the King for such a banquet is described (*Esther* 2.18). Joseph, in the story of *Joseph and Aseneth*, accepted the invitation to Aseneth's father's house but, when dining, sat at a separate table.⁴⁸ *The Letter of Aristeas* describes the dinner offered by the King of Egypt to the Jewish translators. The King takes special care to ensure that the food is Jewish and prepared in the Jewish manner.

For as many cities (as) have (special) customs in the matter of drinking, eating, and reclining, have special officers appointed to look after their requirements. And whenever they come to visit the kings, preparations are made in accordance with their own customs, in order that there may be no discomfort to disturb the enjoyment of their visit. The same precaution was taken in the case of the Jewish envoys. (*Letter of Aristeas* 182)

These preparations included the blessing of the food by Jewish priests and the exclusion of pagan priests who normally offered sacrifices and prayers over the food of the banquet.

When they had taken their seats he instructed Dorotheus to carry out everything in accordance with the customs which were in use amongst his Jewish guests. Therefore he dispensed with the services of the sacred heralds and the sacrificing priests and the others who were accustomed to offer the prayers, and called upon one of our number, Eleazar, the oldest of the Jewish priests, to offer prayer instead. (*Letter of Aristeas* 183-184)

Thus the occasions on which Jews dined within a Gentile environment were few and were marked by special preparation. The occasions themselves were also exceptional, being at the invitation of a king (as with the *Letter of Aristeas* and the *Book of Daniel*) or under the imperative of saving Israel (as with Judith and Esther).

⁴⁷ This is part of the deuterocanonical additions and probably postdates the original book. It seems to originate from the Maccabean or post Maccabean era when the emphasis on 'clean' and 'unclean' was accentuated.

⁴⁸ *Joseph and Aseneth* 7.1 'And Joseph came into Pentephres's house and sat down on a seat; and he washed his feet, and he placed a table in front of him separately, because he would not eat with the Egyptians, for this was an abomination to him'.

Other occasions are cited when Torah-observant Jews refused to eat Gentile food at great personal cost. Thus, although all the kith and kin of Tobit ate the food of Gentiles when they were taken as captives to Nineveh, Tobit alone kept himself from eating the food of Gentiles (*Tobit* 1.11). During the occupation of Antiochus IV, the old scribe, Eleasar, died rather than eat meat which had been sacrificed to idols (2 *Maccabees* 6.18-31). Seven brothers and their mother were slaughtered rather than eat pig's meat (2 *Maccabees* 7.1-41; 4 *Maccabees*).

The phenomenon of restricted commensality with respect to Jews was apparently well known and was probably the origin of the reputation Jews had for being antisocial. The non-Jewish literature draws attention to the peculiarities of Jewish table fellowship and demonstrates that Jewish isolation was the norm rather than the exception. Tacitus records how Jews

regard the rest of mankind with all the hatred of enemies. They sit apart at meals, they sleep apart, and though, as a nation, they are singularly prone to lust, they abstain from intercourse with foreign women; among themselves nothing is unlawful. Circumcision was adopted by them as a mark of difference from other men. (*Histories* 5.5.2)

Philostratus similarly describes the Jews as

inveterate rebels, not against Rome only but against all human society. Living in their peculiar exclusiveness, and having neither their food, nor their libations, nor their sacrifices in common with men. (*Life of Apollonius*, V.33)

Even the Jews themselves acknowledged their isolation.

But reverencing God and conducting themselves according to the Law, they [the Jews] kept themselves apart in the matter of food, and for this reason they appeared hateful to some. (3 *Maccabees* 3.3-5)

Thus a Jew did not accept hospitality from a Gentile except possibly under exceptional circumstances. Yet, in the early church, the believers met in houses and shared a meal as part of their ceremonial Eucharist. This seems to have been the norm from the earliest days of the church when Jews met together in homes after attending the Temple worship (*Acts* 2.46) and continued in the Gentile churches (1 *Cor.* 11.17-22). It must be concluded that the Jewish and Gentile believers met and dined together. For those Jewish believers who

adhered strictly to the Jewish food laws this would probably occur in Jewish homes and the Gentiles had little opportunity of reciprocating Jewish hospitality.

6.4.2 Reciprocity and Gift exchange

Reciprocity is important in almost all cultures as anthropological studies have demonstrated.⁴⁹ In primitive societies, the acceptance of any form of gift bears obligations for the recipient, with honour and status being at stake in the nature of the response. As Mauss⁵⁰ has shown, in primitive and archaic societies, it is not just the gifts which are exchanged but a whole network of relationships which are either cemented or weakened by the process of exchange.⁵¹ When a gift is given, although, in theory, it is given unconditionally, there is expectations of the obligation of response. The recipient is obligated until the 'debt' is repaid by the giving of a counter-gift. Giving, accepting and reciprocating the gift lead to friendship and trust; refusing a gift or failing to reciprocate is 'tantamount to declaring war'.⁵² If the recipient fails to reciprocate with a counter gift, this can lead to his becoming a dependent, rather than a friend, of the giver – in some societies, such as the North American tribes, Kwakiutl, the Haïda and the Tsimshian, 'the punishment for failure to reciprocate is slavery for debt'.⁵³ Nor is refusal to accept the initial gift an option for those who wish to avoid the obligation of reciprocating. To refuse to accept is simply evidence of an inability to reciprocate; it is to 'admit oneself beaten in advance'.⁵⁴ Alternatively, refusal can also be interpreted as proclaiming oneself to be in 'an acknowledged position of hierarchy' – a person or group of previously proven superiority.⁵⁵

Similar attitudes are apparent in Graeco-Roman literature. Thus, although Aristotle can expound the virtues of giving without expecting any return (*Nicomachean Ethics* 8.13.8), he counsels that a recipient should try 'to return the equivalent of services rendered' (*Nicomachean Ethics* 8.13.8-9). Konstan interprets Aristotle as follows:

⁴⁹ van Wees, 1998.

⁵⁰ Mauss' monograph, *The Gift*, appears to be one of the definitive works in this area.

⁵¹ Mauss, 1990, pp 8-18.

⁵² Mauss, 1990, p 13.

⁵³ Mauss, 1990, pp 41-42.

⁵⁴ Mauss, 1990, p 41.

⁵⁵ Mauss, 1990, p 41.

The *philia* or love that obtains among *philoï* has its source in the benefits that they are in a position to confer on one another, but is not reducible to such services. Mutual usefulness is one of the circumstances under which the reciprocal good will characteristic of friendship may arise ... Thus, although friendship is not just an exchange of benefits, Aristotle acknowledges reciprocal help as part of the matrix of social relations in which friendly feelings come to exist.⁵⁶

Cicero contends that generous people do not give in the hope of receiving (*On Friendship* 9.31, 8.27), but nevertheless maintains that ‘no duty is more imperative than that of proving one’s gratitude’ (*On Duties* 1.15.47). In contrast, Seneca argues for altruistic giving in which a response in kind is not needed, but this is contrary to the expectation of the time as is evident from the way Seneca organises his argument:

‘A man,’ it is argued, ‘who has received a benefit, however gratefully he may have received it, has not yet accomplished all his duty, for there remains the part of repayment; just as in playing at ball it is something to catch the ball cleverly and carefully, but a man is not called a good player unless he can handily and quickly send back the ball which he has caught.’ (*On Benefits* 2.32)

But, like Aristotle, when it is the good man who is the recipient not the donor, Seneca, too, holds that ‘to fail to requite one [i.e. a benefit] is not available to a good man’ (*On Friendship* 9.31, 8.27). Ideally then, although the good donor should be altruistic and not seek return, the good receiver must reciprocate if he is to retain his goodness, honour and status with the giver.⁵⁷ The idea of enslavement in the obligation of reciprocating a gift is evident in Seneca’s description of Socrates’ response to the invitation to court of King Archelaus. Socrates refused the invitation because he could not reciprocate and, as a free man, he refused to become indebted to anyone. Seneca says, ‘He [Socrates], whose freedom of speech could not be borne even by a free state, was not willing of his own choice to become a slave’. However, Seneca goes on to argue that Socrates would, in fact,

⁵⁶ Konstan, 1998, p 286.

⁵⁷ Lawrence (2003, pp 83-92) cites the Graeco-Roman philosophers as evidence against accepting an ‘abstracted honour and shame model’ for the Mediterranean world, claiming rather that they represent ‘the existence of different value systems within the ancient world’. The examples given here demonstrate a more complex relationship. There is certainly a counter cultural movement in advocating altruism on the part of the donor but the sense of dishonour associated with lack of reciprocity on the part of the recipient demonstrates that the abstract honour/shame model is still operating effectively alongside any counter cultural tendency. It is debatable just how far an opinion must deviate from the norm and how many adherents such an opinion must have before a counter cultural movement becomes a distinctly ‘different value system’.

incur no debt for Socrates would give to Archelaus intelligence and knowledge far beyond what material benefits Archelaus might bestow on Socrates.

Even if Archelaus were to give Socrates gold and silver, if he learned in return for them to despise gold and silver, would not Socrates be able to repay Archelaus? Could Socrates receive from him as much value as he gave, in displaying to him a man skilled in the knowledge of life and of death, comprehending the true purpose of each? (*On Benefits* 5.6)⁵⁸

Aristotle also deals with the same event saying, ‘He [Socrates] said that ‘one is insulted by being unable to requite benefits, as well as by being unable to requite injuries’’ (*Rhetoric* 2.23.7). Marshall notes that gift exchange, which became ‘agonistic’ (i.e. when a recipient tried to outdo donor in the value of the gift), was only possible ‘within the upper strata of society’.⁵⁹ Thus these writings probably represent the complex of ideals to which not all people could aspire. Nevertheless they set the standard of expected behaviour for others. Lesser mortals may fall below this standard, but in so doing, they demonstrated their inferiority and their lack of honour and status.⁶⁰ This can be seen in some of the satirical literature of the day (see below).

In cultures in which status and honour are vital attributes, as in the first century Graeco-Roman world,⁶¹ gift exchange can take on an added dimension. Gifts are no longer evidence of friendship but become a means of demonstrating ‘wealth and power – an

⁵⁸ Paul has much the same argument when appealing for funds for his collection for the saints in Jerusalem; the Gentiles have received spiritual benefit from Jerusalem and so owe a material debt (*Rom.* 14.27). Also with regard to the collection, in *2 Cor.* 8.13–4, Paul argues for reciprocity in giving: ‘your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance’. The element of shame/dishonour is also apparent in Paul’s appeal to the Corinthians not to be unprepared with their contribution to the collection for then they and he might be humiliated (κατασχυνθῶμεν) in front of the Macedonians (*2 Cor.* 9.4).

⁵⁹ Marshall, 1987, pp 12–3.

⁶⁰ In fact, the Gentile believers may well have occupied the upper strata of society (see chapter 3.3.2). If, as is convincingly argued (e.g. Hengel and Schwemer, 1997, pp 80–90 and 196–204), they originate from the ‘sympathizers’ who attached themselves to the synagogues to varying degrees, then they would be the people who had a particular interest in philosophy, who were attracted to monotheism and the higher ethical standards of Judaism. Barclay (1996a, p 254) suggests that ‘Josephus’ general comments on ‘Judaizing’ applied especially to Gentiles who moved in these higher social echelons’. He argues convincingly that the outbreak of violence in 66 CE ‘represented primarily the antagonisms of the lower social classes ... whose vehemence outweighed the more friendly relations established by some of their social superiors.’

⁶¹ Malina, 2001, pp 27–57; Esler, 1994, p 25. There are also many illustrations of the importance of honour in the New Testament. A prophet is honoured everywhere except among his own (*Mk.* 6.4). Paul exhorts the Romans to ‘love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour’ (*Rom.* 12.10), ‘Pay to all what is due them ... respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due’ (*Rom.* 13.7). He exhorts the Philippians to greet Epaphroditus and ‘honor such people’ (*Phil.* 2.29).

assertion of superiority first, and friendship second'.⁶² Where prestige is at stake, a generous gift can be a challenge rather than an act of friendship. The recipient must respond with an equally, or even more, extravagant gesture, or risk being disgraced and exposed as inferior.⁶³ In Melanesian society, those men who cannot reciprocate in such exchanges because of poverty or dependency are 'relegated to the position of male women'.⁶⁴ Those who compete but do not make the grade are ridiculed by saying 'You are our women'.⁶⁵ Sometimes this 'antagonistic nature of reciprocity' overflows into violence but more often it is a means of competing for status which prevents the extreme of violence.⁶⁶ Mauss terms this form of gift exchange 'agonistic'.⁶⁷ The ultimate form of this extravagant gift-giving is the North American *potlatch*. The *potlatch* is a festival or banquet. Tribes or clans work for months to accumulate the foods and goods necessary to hold the *potlatch*. The opposing tribe or clan is then invited. By accepting the invitation, the opposing tribe contracts to hold a greater *potlatch* of its own. Sometimes the *potlatch* goes so far as to destroy the food and goods as a 'purely sumptuous destruction of wealth that has been accumulated in order to outdo the rival chief'. The 'rival chief' must then do likewise.⁶⁸ Similar agonistic feasts are seen in the highlands of Papua New Guinea and Melanesia.⁶⁹

6.4.3 Meal Invitations and Reciprocity

The *potlatch* demonstrates that invitations to meals/feasts/banquets are important forms of gift exchange. At a more domestic level, one clan invites another when a seal is killed, a preserved case of berries or roots opened up or a whale washed up on the beach.⁷⁰ In organising such feasts the Indian has two objectives: to pay off his own debts and to use 'his labour so that he draws the greatest benefit from them for himself' for those who receive at the feast do so as loans which 'must be given back with interest to the donor or

⁶² van Wees, 1998, p 30.

⁶³ There is some sense of the requirement to accept an invitation to dine in the anger of the host towards those who make excuses for not attending the wedding banquet (*Lk.* 14.15-24; *Mt.* 22.1-13).

⁶⁴ Rubel and Rosman, 1978, p 307.

⁶⁵ Lederman, 1986, p 88.

⁶⁶ van Wees, 1998, pp 30-32.

⁶⁷ Mauss, 1990, pp 4-5.

⁶⁸ Mauss, 1990, pp 6, 7, 39-41.

⁶⁹ van Wees, 1998, p 31.

⁷⁰ Mauss, 1990, pp 34-35.

his heir'.⁷¹ Mauss lists 'food, women, children, property, talismans, land, labour services, priestly functions and rank' among the vast array which constitute 'gift'.⁷²

In Graeco-Roman feasts and dinners, some of the extravagance of the *potlatch* was also apparent. 'Meals and food are markers of social status ... Elaborate feasts and rare, expensive foods were the signs *par excellence* of wealth'.⁷³ A banquet provided an opportunity to demonstrate the differing social status of the guests and host. Juvenal tells of a tyrannical host who serves the best food to himself and his equals in an ostentatious display, but feeds his inferiors on scraps, such as a lobster 'adorning the dish on its way to the master ... walled around with choice asparagus' but 'you [the inferior guest] are served a prawn hemmed in by half an egg' (*The Satires*, 5.80-85), similarly 'the master will eat a mullet dispatched from Corsica ... [w]aiting for you is an eel' (*The Satires* 5.91-103). Juvenal's condemnation of the guest who puts up with such insulting treatment is total and evokes the enslavement associated with lack of reciprocity in primitive tribes. 'He [the master] thinks you have been enslaved by the smell of his kitchen; and he's not far wrong' (*The Satires* 5.162-163). The guest who accepts an invitation to which he cannot respond does so out of selfish motives not friendship and so is dishonoured and degraded.

There may be parallels to this behaviour in the Eucharist at Corinth described in *1 Cor.* 11.19-22 for here Paul complains that some go hungry while others are drunk. Chester has made a detailed comparison of the meals of the Graeco-Roman associations and the Eucharistic meal. Based on archaeological evidence he argues that, in the voluntary associations, a 'small prestigious group' dined separately in the *triclinium* while the rest of the group were outside in the *atrium*. The competition for status within the association took place among the 'small prestigious group' in the *triclinium* whilst the rest went hungry.⁷⁴ Chester speculates that the Lord's Supper at Corinth may be similarly interpreted. A small group (σχίσματα) competed among themselves for honour and status whilst the poor were left outside hungry.⁷⁵ It is the factions among these σχίσματα which Paul opposes so vigorously.⁷⁶

⁷¹ Stocking, 1989, pp 105-108.

⁷² Mauss, 1990, p 14.

⁷³ Gooch, 1993, p 38.

⁷⁴ Chester, 2003, p 250.

⁷⁵ Chester, 2003, p 249.

⁷⁶ Chester, 2003, pp 250-252.

Petronius satirizes a dinner given by Trimalchio who is a freed slave become rich through commerce, one of ‘the *nouveaux riches*’ as Pervo describes him.⁷⁷ Trimalchio aped the nobility by giving a banquet which abounds with excess of food and novelty of presentation (*The Satyricon*).⁷⁸ According to Pervo, ‘[t]he gluttony of this company is a vestige of their former poverty ... [t]hey want to be fed with recognition, but are not. Instead they gorge themselves with food and drink’.⁷⁹ Very few of the invited guests could reciprocate in kind. They repaid the invitation with fawning behaviour,⁸⁰ extravagantly praising Trimalchio’s wealth and supposed wit. They may have choked back laughter at some of his crudity (*The Satyricon*, 47), but to his face they ‘thanked him for his generosity’ (*The Satyricon*, 47), ‘applauded his *bon mot*’ (*The Satyricon* 41), ‘cried “How clever”’ and ‘swore that Hipparchus and Aratus were not in the same league as Trimalchio’ (*The Satyricon* 40). They demonstrate their inferiority by their obsequiousness.

The character of the inferior, who accepts dinner invitations for the sake of a meal or social advancement but who cannot reciprocate, is ridiculed in essays and plays of the era. In the guise of the philosopher, he is the ‘parasite’ of Lucian’s satires,

the sponger [who] needs no pressing to get him to table ... [I]t is no news to any one that other professions slave habitually, and get just one or two holidays a month; ... these are their times of enjoyment. But the sponger has thirty festivals a month; every day is a red-letter day with him. (*The Parasite*)

These phonies (pretend philosophers)

make laughing stocks of themselves by elbowing each other out of the way to get to a rich man’s door, or going to big dinner parties and crudely flattering their hosts, eating more than is good for them ... and finally passing out from a surfeit of neat alcohol. (*The Fisherman*)

⁷⁷ Pervo, 1985, p 308.

⁷⁸ For example a fat goose and all kinds of fish and birds fashioned out of pork meat (70) or a platter whose centre was hare equipped with wings and whose corners were fish in peppered gravy as if swimming (35, 36).

⁷⁹ Pervo, 1985, p 111.

⁸⁰ Epictetus says to the person who has not received a dinner invitation, ‘you did not give the host the price at which he sells his dinner. He sells it for praise; he sells it for personal attention.’ (*Manual* 25.4-5).

The terms used to describe this sort of flatterer are synonymous with dishonour and servility.⁸¹ Aristotle draws a comparison between flatterers and fawning dogs (*Physics* 6). The comic playwright, Menander, in the collection of maxims attributed to him, says 'Many are friends of the dinner table, and not of their friends'.⁸²

Trimalchio's banquet also demonstrates how the status of the invited guests was made obvious by their position at table. Initially, all were appropriately seated. However, Encolpius became 'ashamed to recount the unprecedented performance that followed' for, as the wine flowed more freely, Trimalchio invited his cook 'to recline at table' and he seated himself above Encolpius (*The Satyricon* 70). Similar exhibitions of status at table are evident in the gospels. The relative status of the guest is also evident at banquets by their position at table as in *Mt.* 23.6; *Mk.* 12.39; *Lk.* 14.7-11; 20.46 and in synagogues as in *Mt.* 23.6; *Mk.* 12.39; *Lk.* 20.46. The scribes and Pharisees wanted 'to take the place of honour at banquets and the front seats at synagogues (*Mt.* 23.6 also similar *Mk.* 12.39 and *Lk.* 20.46). Jesus advises the guest not to take the most important place at table (*Lk.* 14.8) yet even here there is the incentive of public honour for the diner will be publicly honoured/glorified (τότε ἔσται σοι δόξα ἐνώπιον πάντων) when invited to 'Move higher' (*Lk.* 14.8-11).

Thus, among equals, there was an expectation that hospitality would be reciprocated. This is exemplified well in Luke's gospel (14.12-14) where Luke depicts Jesus as reversing the expectations of the time by advising his followers NOT to invite friends, brothers and rich neighbours when giving a dinner in case they return the invitation and so offer repayment. This was obviously counter-cultural and the expectation of the time was clearly that such hospitality would and should be reciprocated.

The corollary to reciprocal hospitality was that unreciprocated hospitality was a sign of inferiority, subservience and shame. Pitt-Rivers, in his study of the remote villages of Andalusia, observes how the ability to pay, in the context of hospitality such as in a bar, is an essential part of honourable behaviour. Among equals, disputes arise as to who has the right to pay the bill at the bar after an evening's drinking. 'In such a situation a man may put up a good fight in order to defend his honour even though he

⁸¹ Marshall, 1987, pp 73-78.

⁸² Menander 682 cited in Konstan, 1998, p 287.

may be delighted to lose'.⁸³ Paying is the privilege of the man who has precedence within a group since to be paid for is a sign of inferiority. This responsibility of the superior to pay for the inferior is reminiscent of the patronage which was prevalent in the Roman Empire. Patron-client relationships accepted the inequality which existed between the partners. The clients repaid appropriately to his inferior status. The meal that Petronius describes at Trimalchio's house is evocative of the patron-client relationship. Trimalchio exhibited his superior wealth and his guests repaid with flattery appropriate to their inferior status. Moxnes defines the patron-client relationship as follows:

Patron-client relationships are social relationships between individuals based on a strong element of inequality and difference in power. The basic structure of the relationship is an exchange of different and very unequal resources. A patron has social, economic and political resources that are needed by a client. In return, a client can give expressions of loyalty and honor that are useful for the patron.⁸⁴

Exactly what the Gentiles may have been able to reciprocate in return for the one-sided hospitality of the Jewish believers is unknown. Depending on their social status within the wider Graeco-Roman society, this inability to reciprocate in kind may well have been a source of dishonour and a sign of inferiority for them. Slaves and freedmen may not have been obligated in these circumstances but there is evidence that some of the first Gentile believers at Antioch could have been of higher social status (see pp 126ff). If this is so, then these Gentile believers may, themselves, have exercised patronage in other spheres of their social existence contrasting sharply with the dishonour/lack of status experienced in their inability to reciprocate Jewish hospitality.

Trimalchio's dinner was typical of the symposia of the day, albeit as a caricature of the genuine aristocratic dinner. It had two courses. The first consisted of the food and the second of the wine and conversation/philosophy/entertainment.⁸⁵ Commentators see many similarities between the traditional Graeco-Roman dinner and the celebration of the Eucharist in the early church as described by Paul in *1 Corinthians* 11.⁸⁶

⁸³ Pitt-Rivers, 1966, pp 59-60.

⁸⁴ Moxnes, 1991, p 242. The most obvious illustration of the patron-client relationship was the duty and honour which manumitted slaves still owed to their former masters – duties which could last a life-time (Harrill, 1995, p 162).

⁸⁵ Smith, 1981, p 319; Neyrey, 1996, pp 161-163.

⁸⁶ Smith, 1981, pp 325-329.

Such banquets were highly structured with regard to both the role of the participants and the food served.⁸⁷ According to Neyrey, they were ceremonies not rituals. Unlike rituals, they did not focus on change or crossing boundaries, rather they served to ‘bolster the boundaries defining a group’, reinforcing the ‘established roles and statuses’ of those within the group.⁸⁸ In the context of the early church with its mixed Gentile and Jewish elements, therefore, where commensality was restricted to the Jewish environment, the Eucharist may well have reinforced the status differences within the community as a whole, designating the Gentile believers as inferior and ‘clients’ to their Jewish patrons.

6.4.4 The Status of Gentiles at Antioch

From the studies on reciprocity, the inability of Gentile believers to reciprocate the hospitality of Jewish believers could have been a cause of dishonour to them and/or an indication of their subordinate status. The findings of the Jerusalem Conference, which attributed full membership of the early church to Gentile believers without circumcision, encouraged the Gentile believers to view their status/worth within the early church in a new and enhanced light.⁸⁹ They were not subordinate to their Jewish ‘brothers’; they were full members of the church with their Jewish ‘brothers’ and capable of taking on roles of leadership and authority within the community. In the society of the time, such a change involved shifting the *status quo* within the community such that the Gentile believers were perceived as worthy of greater honour. Honour was not just an individual’s understanding of his/her own worth; it was the social acknowledgement of that worth by the community at large.⁹⁰ In addition, the understanding of honour and status, as of many other commodities in first century Mediterranean culture, was that they were limited.⁹¹ One individual or group could not increase their honour/status unless another individual or group lost honour/status.⁹² The method prescribed to effect such changes in status was the traditional ‘game’ of challenge and response.⁹³

⁸⁷ Neyrey, 1996, pp 162-163; Smith, 1981, pp 325-329.

⁸⁸ Neyrey, 1991, pp 362-363.

⁸⁹ I have discussed the Jerusalem Conference and its findings in the previous chapter.

⁹⁰ Malina, 2001, pp 30-32.

⁹¹ Malina, 2001, pp 81-107, also p 33; Esler, 1994, p 35.

⁹² Malina, 2001, p 33; Esler, 1994, p 35.

⁹³ Esler, 1994, pp 27-28.

6.4.5 Challenge and Response

Challenge and response followed distinct rules. The challenger issued a challenge in word and/or deed. The challenge was apparent to both the recipient of the challenge and to the community. The response of the recipient, and, more importantly, how the community evaluated that response, determined the extent to which honour was lost or gained by challenger and recipient.⁹⁴ Pitt-Rivers provides many examples from his studies on the villages of Andalusia.⁹⁵ Most involve honour in marital relationships, but not all. Pitt-Rivers cites the story of the visiting football team who do honour to the village by coming to visit but who only preserve that honour if they lose. A visiting football team, who dares to win, ‘inflicts humiliation’ on the village; by showing their greater prowess the visiting team have successfully challenged the local community, who have failed to match the challenge. As an instance of this, Pitt-Rivers relates the events at Ubrique when the superior team from Cortes de la Frontera scored two goals within the first five minutes of the match. However, they did not win for the furious public, unwilling to suffer such dishonour, ‘drove the visitors off the field and out of town in a hailstorm of stones, and their bus was sent after them to pick them up and take them away’.⁹⁶

Challenge and response occurred between equals. Pitt-Rivers cites the mentally deranged boy who allowed his mother’s sheep to wander into the territory of the other land-owners of the valley. Normally encroaching another’s land was a cause ‘of quarrels in which the honour of both parties became involved’, but this was not the case with the boy, for he was ‘outside the community of normal men’ and so ‘unable to affront’.⁹⁷ Challenge and response also only occurs with outsiders;⁹⁸ one’s own family was honourable but all outside the family were untrustworthy and dishonourable.⁹⁹ Esler has suggested that challenge and response were inappropriate within the early church community whose members addressed each other in terms of kinship (ἀδελφοί in *Gal.* 1.2; 3.15; 4.12; 5.11; 6.1 and τέκνα μου in *Gal.* 4.19).¹⁰⁰ However, there are many examples of competition

⁹⁴ Malina, 2001, p 33.

⁹⁵ Pitt-Rivers, 1966, pp 39-71.

⁹⁶ Pitt-Rivers, 1966, p 57.

⁹⁷ Pitt-Rivers, 1966, p 57.

⁹⁸ Malina, 2001, p 35, pp 36, 39; Esler, 1994, pp 27-8; Pitt-Rivers, 1966, p 31.

⁹⁹ Malina, 2001, p 36; Esler, 1994, p 27.

¹⁰⁰ Esler (1994, p 27) proposes that the nomination of fellow believers as ‘brothers’ was a ‘way of appropriating to the life of the communities the most powerful corporate symbol in this culture – the family.’

associated with status within the Pauline literature. Paul asserts his claim as an apostle over and against that of the *ψευδαπόστολοι* - he is a better minister of Christ (2 *Cor.* 11.13-29), just as, before his conversion, he had advanced in Judaism beyond many of his contemporaries (*Gal.* 1.14). The objectives may have changed after conversion but the impetus to excel in these new objectives was unchanged. Lawrence makes much the same point when she says 'even within a system based on sacred ideals, 'competitive' approaches were adapted'.¹⁰¹ However, her claim that 'these claims were not centred on social precedence or challenge, but rather honour acquired on account of moral behaviour before God' may be too naïve. In 2 *Corinthians* Paul is seeking honour from his readers following the dishonour he has experienced as a result of the challenge to his position as an apostle. Paul does not consider himself *ὑστερηκέναι* to the *ὑπεριλίαν ἀποστόλων* (2 *Cor.* 11.5 and 12.11), but he refuses to give the false apostles 'an opportunity to be considered equal' to himself (2 *Cor.* 11.12). Paul places in order of rank the various positions in the church, with apostles first (1 *Cor.* 12.28). In 1 *Cor.* 14 Paul reprimands those who seem to believe they have excelled in speaking in tongues, devaluing this gift and rating other gifts higher, but he also comments that he, himself, speaks in tongues *ὑμῶν μᾶλλον* (1 *Cor.* 14.18). *Galatians* is replete with references to boasting. The Galatians are advised not to be envious of one another, suggesting that those who had been circumcised regarded themselves as better than the uncircumcised (*Gal.* 5.26; 6.3). The allocation of 'weak' and 'strong' in 1 *Cor.* 4.10 and *Rom.* 14.1-2 also implies competition associated with status.

In the game of challenge and response, the nature and severity of the challenge could vary. A positive challenge might be aimed at entering another's social space in order to share that space, whereas a negative challenge might aim to dislodge another from his space so as to occupy it oneself.¹⁰² The severity of the challenge may range from totally dishonouring the recipient, such that no response is possible, to the normal daily interactions that necessitate social responses, such as responding to a gift, by giving one of equal value or reciprocating dinner invitations.¹⁰³ Esler contends that Paul's action in taking Titus to Jerusalem, placing Titus into the heart of the Jerusalem church, represented

¹⁰¹ Lawrence, 2003. p 180.

¹⁰² Malina, 2001, p 33; Esler, 1994, p 28.

¹⁰³ Malina, 2001, pp 44-45; Esler, 1994, p 28.

a blatant challenge to their ‘social space’.¹⁰⁴ However, in a previous chapter (see p 168), I have presented some alternative understandings of Titus’ presence at Jerusalem, which include the idea of Titus as an emerging leader of the Gentile subgroup. Even if Titus was a challenge to the Jerusalem church, the challenge seems to have been interpreted positively for he was not circumcised and all sides of the debate seemed to emerge from the Conference satisfied with the conclusion. Paul boasts that his mission to the Gentiles was accepted by the ‘pillars’ just as was Peter’s mission to Jews (*Gal.* 2.7-9) and that they extended the right hand of κοινωνία to both him and Barnabas (*Gal.* 2.9). From the side of Paul’s opponents, Peter, James and John were also satisfied apparently with the solution and neither Paul in *Galatians* nor Luke in *Acts* 15 gives any hint of a schism involving the Law-observant believers (which would have been probable if they had felt their identity as Jews threatened by any of the decisions of the Conference). In contrast, the subsequent events at Antioch do seem to have led to open conflict between Peter and Paul (*Gal.* 2.11, 14).

6.5 The Antioch Dispute

The incident at Antioch follows on immediately from the Jerusalem Conference and is in sharp contrast to it. Paul relates the details very briefly and Luke makes no mention of it. Peter visits Antioch and, at first, eats with the Gentiles. As I have argued above (6.4.1), the danger of eating with Gentiles rested in the food consumed; as long as the food was *kosher* (as would be the case in a Jewish home) there was no real objection to such table fellowship. I conclude, therefore, that it was reciprocal hospitality which Peter and the other Antiochene Jews enjoyed initially at Antioch. However, when the people from James arrived at Antioch, the situation changed and Peter withdrew (ὑποστέλλω) and separated himself (ἀφορίζω) taking the other Jews with him (*Gal.* 2.12-13).¹⁰⁵ It is interesting that Paul demonstrates most aggression towards Peter even though Barnabas and the other Antiochene Jews, whom Paul knew well and were his close colleagues, behaved similarly. Any account of the Antioch dispute must attempt some explanation of Paul’s hostility being directed primarily at Peter.

¹⁰⁴ Esler, 1998, p 130.

¹⁰⁵ Betz (1979, p 108) claims ὑποστέλλω has connotations of a military withdrawal but ἀφορίζω is a cultic form of separation from the unclean. Dunn (1993, p 125) argues that the imperfect tense could imply some hesitation on Peter’s part. The terminology also supports the suggestion that it was contact with Gentiles in a Gentile environment that was problematic. It is more difficult to conceive of how Peter could ‘withdraw and separate himself’ if the contact was on Jewish rather than Gentile territory.

6.5.1 Peter and Paul at Antioch

An analysis of the interaction between Peter and Paul at Antioch shows clearly the typical challenge and response relationship. Paul acts as a typical challenger when he ‘confronts Peter to his face in front of everyone’ (*Gal.* 2.11). Paul challenges Peter and the Antiochene Jews that they are not ‘walking in line with the truth of the gospel’ (*Gal.* 2.14), but ‘to be called a liar by anyone is a great public dishonour’.¹⁰⁶ In typical challenge and response behaviour, Paul makes his challenge ‘ἐμπροσθεν πάντων’; it is a public and community-based challenge. He also challenges ‘κατὰ πρόσωπον’. The head plays a prominent role in the symbolism of honour – the family leader sits at the head of the table and the most influential member of an organization is the ‘head of the organization’. A king has a crown placed on his head,¹⁰⁷ and it is the head which is anointed with oil (as Aaron was anointed priest in *Gen.* 29.21 or in anointing the king in *1 Sam.* 10.1, *1 Sam.* 16.13, *1 Kings* 1.39 and *2 Kings* 19.3). The face, too, has symbolic implications; the front of the head is the ‘focus of awareness’ – ‘to affront someone is to challenge another in such a way that the person is, and cannot avoid being, aware of it’.¹⁰⁸ One ‘loses face’ when one fails to do what is expected of one, fails to do what has been promised, loses an important argument or makes an obvious mistake. In contrast one ‘saves face’ when one avoids being found out in a mistake, wins an important argument or manages to produce on a promise. When the soldiers were bent on humiliating and shaming Jesus they spat in his face (*Mt.* 26.67) and struck him on the face (*Jn.* 19.3). So, when Paul confronts Peter, he displays the classic elements of Mediterranean challenge and response behaviour. Further, as Paul was the leader of the Gentile subgroup, it is likely that the confrontation represented some element of challenge by Gentiles on the Jewish factions present at Antioch at that time. Paul does not inform us of Peter’s response but, as he seems to have lost the argument at Antioch,¹⁰⁹ we must assume that Peter was able to respond in such a way that the community as a whole did not withdraw their respect/honour from him. Peter won the public vote. Thus it would be the challenger, Paul, who was dishonoured.

¹⁰⁶ Malina, 2001, p 42.

¹⁰⁷ Malina, 2001, p 39.

¹⁰⁸ Malina, 2001, p 39.

¹⁰⁹ Paul would surely have included a positive outcome in his *Letter to the Galatians* as it would have been highly relevant and supported his argument with the Galatians. So Esler, 1987, p 87; Dunn, 1990, p 160; Taylor, 1992, p 137.

Peter is an important figurehead for Paul; it was to Peter that the risen Christ first appeared and only afterwards to the rest of the apostles (*1 Cor.* 15.5), it was Peter to whom Paul first paid a visit at Jerusalem three years after his conversion (*Gal.* 1.18), Peter was the acknowledged apostle to the Jews (*Gal.* 2.7) and Peter was one of the three ‘pillars’ who gave his approval to Paul at Jerusalem. Paul was content with the solution reached at Jerusalem; it enabled the Gentiles to retain their identity whilst still being full members of the Jesus movement, yet there was the likelihood that the Gentile believers would remain a minority subgroup, outnumbered by the Law-observant Jewish faction. The arrival of Peter at Antioch changed that perception. Peter accepted the status of the Gentile believers by eating with them and so was not aligning himself with those Law-observant Jewish believers whose Jewish identity was jeopardized by such contact with Gentiles. To have Peter, the apostle to the Jews, willingly associating with Gentile believers in table fellowship was a significant conquest for the pro-Gentile, Pauline subgroup within the early church. It now seemed that it would be the Law-observant Jewish believers who would comprise the minority subgroup within the community of believers. I suggest that it was this perception, which was dashed when the people from James arrived, that was the reason why Paul directed his aggression most forcibly at Peter.

The arrival of the people from James changed things completely. Far from aligning himself with the Gentile subgroup, Peter now withdrew and separated himself, taking the other Antiochene Jews with him. As I have already discussed earlier in this chapter, commentators have given a variety of reasons for this withdrawal. In terms of the Jerusalem agreement which I proposed in the previous chapter, the ‘people from James’ fall into the category of those Jewish believers who felt that their Jewish identity was threatened by close contact with Gentiles. They could not and would not be expected to participate in reciprocal table fellowship with Gentiles. Their arrival at Antioch posed problems for Peter and the Antiochene Jewish believers for they now were faced with a choice – to extend Jewish hospitality to the Jewish visitors and so to withdraw from reciprocal table fellowship with the Gentile believers or to continue with the previous practice of accepting Gentile hospitality. Perhaps, as the use of the imperfect tense for these verbs suggests, the withdrawal and separation were gradual with the Antiochene Jewish believers initially dividing their time between the Gentile believers and the ‘people

from James'. Perhaps, as Taylor suggests, the separation was supposed to be temporary lasting only for the duration of the visit of the 'people from James'.¹¹⁰

Whatever the exact details of the separation, and this will probably never be knowable at a distance of two thousand years, it is possible to speculate on the effects of severing reciprocal table fellowship with the Gentile believers. The participation of Peter in table fellowship with Gentiles had suggested to Paul and the Pauline faction that the Gentile believers were accepted as full members of the early church by the majority of the Jewish believers, but Peter's withdrawal from table fellowship gave a very different message. It was now the Gentile believers who were demonstrated to be the minority grouping, isolated and with their status as full (and equal) members of the Jesus movement contested. The fact that the conflict could not be solved amicably simply by Gentile/Jewish social intercourse returning to a restricted commensality – the level that probably had operated prior to the Jerusalem Conference – indicates that other issues were involved. I suggest that what was at stake was not merely the question of whether Gentiles could be members of the early church, but rather what position they held and what was their worth/status/honour within that early church.¹¹¹ Their inability to reciprocate hospitality left the Gentile believers in a position of inferiority, dependency and subordination within the early church. As long as the 'people from James' were present the Gentile believers could not enjoy the status of full members of the early church which had been their understanding of the Jerusalem Conference.

6.5.2 The Challenge of the Antiochene Gentile Believers

It is appropriate to understand the Gentile believers as engaging in the challenge–response 'game' when they began to invite Jewish believers into their homes. Previously, Gentile believers had engaged in only restricted commensality with their Jewish 'brothers' in much the same way that Gentile 'sympathizers' associated with Jews in the Diaspora. This restricted commensality was a sign of the dependence of the Gentile believers on their Jewish brothers and was a constant reminder of the inferiority of the Gentiles within the early church as were the 'sympathizers' within Judaism. After the Jerusalem Conference, Gentiles could view their status within the church differently. Paul's mission to the

¹¹⁰ Taylor, 1992, p 135.

¹¹¹ I have discussed the various understandings of the position of Gentile believers in a previous chapter (Chapter 4.2, pp 152ff).

Gentiles had been accepted – ‘ἐμοὶ γὰρ οἱ δοκοῦντες οὐδεν προσανέθεντο’ (*Gal.* 2.6) but ‘δεξιὰς ἔδωκαν ἐμοὶ καὶ Βαρναβᾶ κοινωνίας’ (*Gal.* 2.9). All believers were equal as in the baptismal formula (οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαίος οὐδὲ Ἕλληγν - *Gal.* 3.28). As a move towards improving their status in practice, Gentile believers started to invade the social space of the Jewish believers by doing something which, up to then, had been the prerogative of Jewish believers. They extended invitations to Jews to dine in their homes. (The invitation of Zaccheus to Jesus to dine at his house demonstrates that, when a dinner invitation was extended by an ‘unsuitable’ host, he could be perceived as stepping outside the normal limits of respectable behaviour. ‘All the people began to mutter “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner”’ – *Lk.* 19.7). While the challenge of Paul on Peter seems to have been severe and negative, the challenge of the Gentile believers appears more positive and less severe, being part of normal social intercourse. It was a request to share the honour/status of the Jewish believers rather than an attempt to dislodge them from their place of honour. As such, the challenge seems initially to have been received positively by the Antiochene Jews. They were prepared to allow the Gentile believers into their social space. They accepted the invitations to dine, even Peter was in the habit of eating μετὰ τῶν ἔθνῶν (*Gal.* 2.11).¹¹² No doubt they perceived the change as having mutually beneficial effects for the church as a whole. If that were the case, to respond positively brought no disgrace on the Antiochene Jewish believers as a group.¹¹³

However, the challenge may not have been viewed in this light by the Law-observant Jewish believers in Jerusalem. Their interpretation of the findings of the Jerusalem Conference did not include reciprocal commensality. The Gentile believers may be full members of the church of Christ, but Jews were still Jews and certain codes of behaviour were expected of them, and certain boundaries still remained intact. Thus the arrival of the ‘people from James’ forced Peter and the other Jewish believers into a choice; by the terms of the Jerusalem agreement the ‘people from James’ would not be expected to associate with the Gentile believers, at least not so far as reciprocal commensality. The ‘people from James’ would, therefore, dine apart from the Gentile believers and hospitality probably demanded that a fellow Jerusalemite like Peter should join them. Unfortunately the influence of Peter was such that the rest of the Antiochene Jews also withdrew from Gentile commensality.

¹¹² The use of the imperfect tense of συνεσθίω suggests that it was not an isolated occurrence.

¹¹³ Malina, 2001, p 33.

It is easy to imagine the shame and dishonour felt by the Gentile believers as a group, after having challenged and had that challenge received positively, now to be rejected and humiliated once more. The rejection of Gentile commensality by the Jewish believers could be interpreted in two ways: either as an affront and mark of dishonour or as a sign that the Gentile believers were, in fact, still inferior to their Jewish ‘brothers’. The initial action of Peter in dining with Gentiles had raised hope that the Gentile believers were, indeed, full and equal members of the early church but his subsequent withdrawal demonstrated that this was an illusion and that Gentile believers could never be more than an inferior subgroup, at least on those important occasions when the whole church (Law-observant Jewish as well as Gentile believers) were gathered together.

6.5.3 The Implications of Reciprocal Commensality at Antioch

At this point the question needs to be posed as to whether the commensality at issue at Antioch was purely social or also involved the more important ritual Eucharistic meals. Esler believes the issue is the Eucharistic meal.¹¹⁴ Holmberg, too, acknowledges that all meals among believers carried some implications for the celebration of the Eucharist.¹¹⁵ On the other hand, Zetterholm points out that Paul does not use Eucharistic language in describing the commensality at Antioch. In *1 Corinthians* 11.20, he specifically terms the Eucharistic meal the ‘κυριακὸν δεῖπνον’, whereas, in *Galatians*, the language is that commonly associated with social interaction.¹¹⁶ However, Paul rarely speaks of the Eucharist, except in *1 Corinthians*, so it might be argued that we have little evidence of what is or is not Eucharistic language in Paul’s writings. It could equally be said that Paul does not use the language of a Corinthian Eucharist in his *Letter to the Galatians*.¹¹⁷

If the commensality issue at Antioch also included the Eucharistic meal, then the Antioch dispute might well have entailed the additional question of who was eligible to host and/or preside at the Eucharist. This makes the problem of reciprocal commensality even more important. We know from some of Paul’s other letters that hosting the Eucharist was a function of the leaders of the local community. Prisca and Aquila hosted house churches in Rome and Ephesus (*Rom.* 16.3-5; *1 Cor.* 16.19) and they appeared to be

¹¹⁴ Esler, 1994, pp 52-53.

¹¹⁵ Holmberg, 1998, p 405.

¹¹⁶ Zetterholm, 2003, pp 149-150.

¹¹⁷ Paul did not write extensively on the Eucharist in his letters. *1 Cor.* 10 & 11 is his only direct reference to the Eucharistic meal.

important leaders in the early church (*Rom.* 16.4). Stephanas was a householder and someone who merited obedience (*1 Cor.* 16.15). In Rome, Colossae and Corinth, churches met in the houses of patrons.¹¹⁸ As I outlined in Chapter 1 (see pp 11ff) scholars vary in their estimation of the importance of such patrons. Following Holmberg, most scholars agree that the highest level of authority lay with the apostles and the itinerant missionaries.¹¹⁹ But among the local leadership many rate the patrons as of prime importance.¹²⁰ Others express a 'more balanced picture' and pay due attention to those displaying charismatic gifts (*1 Cor.* 12.27-30), but along with the patrons.¹²¹

It must be noted that most of the examples above come from Pauline churches. They do not prove that similar house churches existed at an earlier date in Antioch. However, there is reason to believe that house churches were the norm throughout the early church. Although it is possible that Luke may be reflecting the *Sitz im Leben* of his own community, in *Acts* (2.46), he relates how, even in Jerusalem, the disciples went to the Temple to pray but met afterwards in houses. The communities in Jerusalem at this early time were probably entirely Jewish but, from this, it seems that the tradition of communities meeting in the homes of believers had been established very early in the development of the early church. The presence of house churches in Rome (Prisca and Aquila had a church which met in their house according to *Rom.* 16.3) also demonstrates that such a tradition was present in communities which were not founded by Paul (*Rom.* 1.13).

As I outlined earlier (see pp 45ff) some of the arguments behind the assumption that wealthy householders were leaders within the early church lie in the background to the Graeco-Roman household. The head of the household, the *paterfamilias*, had overall responsibility (even legal responsibility¹²²) for those under his roof. It was he who would go out into the outside world to do business and engage in affairs of the *polis*, while his women and servants remained at home. The structure of the household was basically

¹¹⁸ Aristobulus (*Rom.* 16.10), Narcissus (*Rom.* 16.11), Philemon (*Plm.* 1-3), Stephanas (*1 Cor.* 16.15), Gaius (*Rom.* 16.23).

¹¹⁹ Holmberg, 1978, pp 14-57; Horrell, 1999, pp 319-320.

¹²⁰ Thus Campbell, 1994, p 126 and Maier 1991, pp 35-36.

¹²¹ Horrell, 1999, p 319 as also Meeks (1983, pp 134-6) and Holmberg (1978, p 118) who also supposes that Paul sought out wealthy patrons to act as church leaders (1978, pp 104-107).

¹²² In *Acts* 17.6-9, Jason appears legally responsible for the actions of Paul while he is staying with him.

hierarchical and the *paterfamilias* expected a certain degree of respect and obedience.¹²³ Thus, when groups of believers began to meet in homes, it was natural for the householder to assume a position of authority and leadership within the believing community (i.e. equivalent to the *paterfamilias*). Such seems to have been the case when voluntary associations were established in the homes of patrons.¹²⁴ Voluntary associations, like the early church communities, were often dependent on benefactors or patrons to house them and provide for their more practical needs and these patrons were rewarded with ‘effective control of the club’s life’.¹²⁵ Thus, for those Gentile believers who owned homes and were accustomed to entertain there – those Gentile believers who were the likely emerging leaders of the Gentile subgroup – the ability to host the Eucharist for the believing community was a means of exercising leadership and influence within the church. The possibility of reciprocal commensality could open up the way for them to exercise more fully the role of leadership within the church by presiding over the principal liturgical event of the community, a role to which they were already accustomed within the wider field of their acquaintances. When the arrival of the ‘people from James’ put an end to reciprocal commensality at Antioch the opportunity of presiding over the common Eucharist meal also ended, at least in terms of the whole church community.

6.5.4 Antioch and the Social Psychology of Schismatic Groups

The evidence of *Galatians* and *Acts* is that the dispute at Antioch resulted in Paul leaving the Antiochene community. It would appear that Paul did not win the confrontation with Peter; if he had done so it is likely that he would have mentioned the fact in his *Letter to the Galatians*.¹²⁶ Paul does not mention Barnabas as a co-worker in his letters and seems to go his own way from this time onwards.¹²⁷ Taylor concludes that the Antioch incident

‘brought to an end the partnership between Barnabas and Paul, and also to the latter’s association with the church at Antioch’.¹²⁸

¹²³ Meeks, 1983, p 30 who also points out that, at that time, the concept of inferior and superior roles in society was basic to the well-being of society as a whole. Those who exercised authority were those who were fit to exercise authority.

¹²⁴ For example in Rome ‘collegium quod est in domu Sergiae Paullinae’ (*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* 6.9148).

¹²⁵ Meeks, 1983, p 78.

¹²⁶ Esler, 1987, p 87; Dunn, 1990, p 160; Taylor, 1992, p 137.

¹²⁷ Conzelmann (1987, p 123) attributes the separation of Paul and Barnabas to the incident at Antioch and not to the disagreement over Mark as Luke reports in *Acts* 15.38-39.

¹²⁸ Taylor, 1992, p 139.

Dunn, too, sees the Antioch incident as a parting of ways.

The defeat at Antioch, therefore, in all probability involved a triple breach – with Jerusalem (hence the distancing formula, particularly of ii.6), with Barnabas (cf. *Acts* xv.36-41), and with Antioch (which, even according to *Acts* xviii.22, he only visited once more).¹²⁹

Much of the socio-psychological work on group dynamics has concentrated on group cohesion rather than schismatic groups. But recently some work has been performed on schismatic groups.¹³⁰ Sani and his co-workers have developed a model of schism which seems apt for the breach between Paul and the Antiochene church. Sani proposes that schism occurs when a subgroup within a superordinate group perceives that changes are occurring which undermine the characteristics which are fundamental to the identity of the group (see chapter 2.6.4). This subversion of group identity leads to a decreased sense of loyalty to the group and perceptions of group disunity.¹³¹ Further, the group experiencing these negative feelings can also feel voiceless and unable to express the dissent that they are experiencing. When this is applied to Paul's situation it is clear that the dispute was central to Paul's understanding of his mission to the Gentiles. Paul had argued at the Jerusalem Conference that Gentile believers should be full members of the early church, with all that that entailed in terms of exercising leadership and authority, without adhering to all the Torah observances which were incumbent on Law-observant Jews. Paul opposes the suggestion that Gentile believers should keep all aspects of the Law whenever that suggestion is made. He argues against it at the Jerusalem Conference (*Gal.* 2.3-5); he confronted Peter when Peter withdrew from reciprocal commensality (*Gal.* 2.11-12); he opposed the agitators for circumcision at Galatia (*Gal.* 5.11 and 6.15) and at Philippi (*Phil.* 3.2-3); he pleads for tolerance with the 'weak' in Rome but, nonetheless, clearly shows that he, himself, belongs to the 'strong' who believe that neither food nor the keeping of days is important in this new age (*Rom.* 14.1 -15.2).

¹²⁹ Dunn, 1990, p 130; Holmberg (1978, pp 34, 65) also speaks of a 'break in relations' between Barnabas and Paul and between the Jewish Christian part of the Antiochene church and Paul.

¹³⁰ Sani, 2005, 2008, Sani and Reicher, 1998, 2000; Sani and Todman, 2002; Prislín *et al.*, 2000; Hart and van Vugt, 2006; Prislín and Christensen, 2005.

¹³¹ Sani, 2008, p 727.

[T]he kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (*Rom.* 14.17)

For Paul the essential feature for membership of the early church is faith in Christ.

[W]e have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law. (*Gal.* 2.16)

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; the only thing that counts is faith working through love. (*Gal.* 5.6)

In Paul's eyes it is this crucial identity of faith in Christ that is being questioned by Peter when he withdraws and separates himself from the Gentile believers. He and Peter no longer share 'a consensus on the beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviours – in a word, the *norms* – that characterise the group'.¹³² When this occurs then schism becomes a possibility.

The trigger that may eventually lead some members to join a schism is the perception that the change implies a radical subversion of the group identity, a denial of its 'true', deep essence.¹³³

But schism is not inevitable at this stage. If the dissenters believe that they can voice their dissent and be heard then the group may yet survive.¹³⁴ Paul certainly seems to have voiced his dissent (*Gal.* 2.11-14) but his voice was not heeded and, apparently, was not likely to be heeded.¹³⁵ Thus the Antiochene church no longer represented the essential norms of the gospel as he understood them from the revelation he experienced on the road to Damascus (*Gal.* 1.11-12) and all his efforts to bring Peter and the Antiochene Jewish believers back to the gospel of Christ had failed. Schism was inevitable and Paul had no alternative but to leave Antioch.

In Chapter 2 (see pp 66ff) I argued that leadership of a group or subgroup was dependent on the leader being prototypical of the group by exhibiting in his/her person

¹³² Sani, 2008, p 726.

¹³³ Sani, 2008, p 727.

¹³⁴ Sani and Reicher, 2000, p 110, Sani, 2008, p 727.

¹³⁵ Taylor (1992, p 137) suggests that only a few, such as Titus and Silvanus, supported Paul in the dispute.

the norms of the group. I made reference to Hogg and Knippenberg who have demonstrated how the prototype of a group is in flux when social context is in flux and can change depending on the out-group to which the in-group compares itself.¹³⁶ Using a measure of contrast (Metacontrast Ratio)¹³⁷ the prototypicality of each member of the group can be calculated against two opposing out-groups and generated figures to demonstrate the flux (Fig. 6.1 and 6.2). The figures below illustrate how the most prototypical member of the in-group changes from C to E when the salient comparison for the in-group shifts from right to left. At Antioch the shift is from the position prior to the appearance of the ‘people from James’, when reciprocal table fellowship was the norm, to the position after their arrival when Peter and the rest of the Antiochene Jewish believers withdrew from such table fellowship and exclusion of Gentiles from table fellowship became the norm. It is obvious that there is an important shift in prototypicality from C to E where C represents a position more distant from the norms of the ‘people from James’ than does position E. Paul, as a leader of the mission to the Gentiles and of the pro-Gentile faction at Antioch, would occupy a position close to C. With the arrival of the ‘people from James’ and the shift away from reciprocal table fellowship, Paul, at position C, is no longer prototypical of the group at Antioch. The prototypicality of the community at Antioch has moved nearer the position of the Law-observant Jewish believers who experience a threat to their Jewish identity by reciprocal commensality with Gentile believers and further from Paul’s pro-Gentile faction. As leadership partly depends on the leader being prototypical of the group, Paul’s position as a leader within the Antiochene church is threatened. He remains prototypical of the pro-Gentile faction but not of the Antiochene community as a whole.

¹³⁶ Hogg and Knippenberg, 2003, pp 8-9.

¹³⁷ ‘The ratio is the relationship between the specific position of the member and the out-group position relative to the specific position of the member and the position of every other member of the in-group’ (Hogg and Knippenberg, 2003, p 8) so it compares the difference for the specific member from the out-group (as a positive factor) but also takes into account the difference of the specific member from the mean position of the rest of the in-group (as a negative factor).

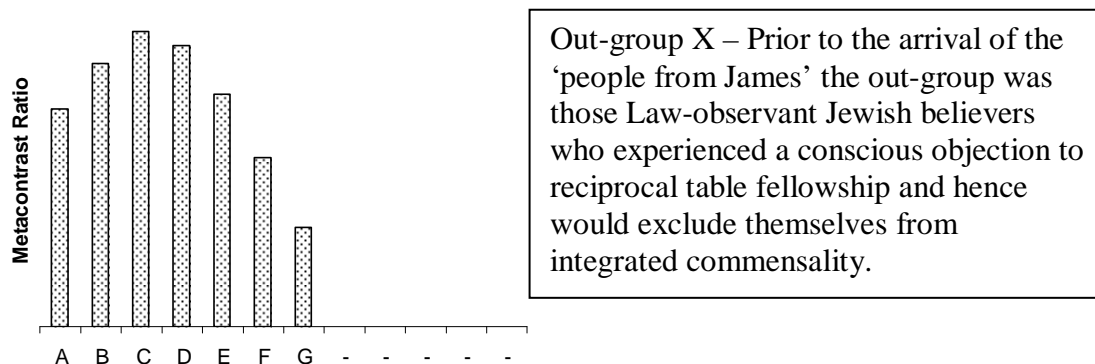


Figure 6.1 Members of the Antiochene church (A-G) are compared to an out-group of Jewish believers who experienced identity threat in eating with Gentiles.

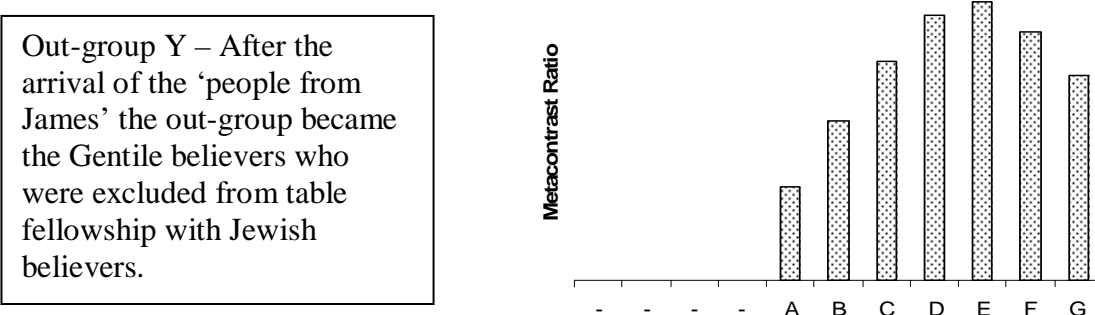


Figure 6.2 Members of the Antiochene church (A-G) are compared to an out-group of Gentile believers who desire reciprocal table fellowship with Jewish believers.

In addition, the effect on Paul of Peter’s change of heart was probably intensified by the recent belief that Peter had aligned himself with what might be termed the Gentile-tolerant group. Prislin *et al.* in their study on schism concluded that the reactions to the loss of the majority position were greater than the reactions to gaining the majority position.¹³⁸ Paul’s disappointment at Peter’s withdrawal from table fellowship was probably greater than had been his pleasure at Peter’s initial willingness to share in reciprocal hospitality with Gentile believers. In a further study, Prislin and Christensen argued that the danger of schism is greatest immediately following radical changes within the group but, if the group survives this initial period, then the chances of a breach

¹³⁸ Prislin *et al.*, 2000.

within the group decreases with time and with gradual interaction between subgroups.¹³⁹ In terms of the Antioch dispute, Paul's departure seems to have been immediate. There was no time to heal the breach. Nor is it likely that Paul was alone in deciding that the only course of action was departure. It is probable that Titus, at least, also left Antioch with Paul. Titus had been closely associated with Paul as a delegate at the Jerusalem Conference and we hear of Titus again as Paul boasts of him (2 *Cor.* 7.14) and speaks of him as a valued co-worker (2 *Cor.* 8.23) and brother (2 *Cor.* 2.13). Titus was entrusted with the collection for the poor in Corinth (2 *Cor.* 8.6). It makes sense then that Titus left Antioch with Paul and became his travelling companion immediately following the Antioch dispute.

6.6 Conclusions

The dispute at Antioch represents the testing of the agreement of the Jerusalem Conference in practice. The agreement of the Jerusalem Conference needs to be such that it provides a reasonable explanation for the events at Antioch. It must account for the ambiguous actions of Peter in first eating and then withdrawing from eating with Gentile believers. It must account for the ease with which Barnabas and the other Antiochene Jewish believers followed Peter in withdrawing from table fellowship. It must account for Paul's anger being directed specifically at Peter and finally it must provide adequate cause for Paul severing contact with the church at Antioch.

In this chapter, I have attempted to argue that, at Antioch, reciprocal commensality between Jewish and Gentile believers became an established practice after the Jerusalem Conference. This, I believe, was the product of the more favourable attitude towards the Gentile believers which resulted from the findings of the Jerusalem Conference. The Gentile believers were acknowledged as full members of the early church, able to exercise roles of authority and leadership, but, with the provision that enabled those Law-observant Jewish believers whose identity as Jews was threatened by excessive contact with Gentiles to remain as a distinct and discreet grouping of the early church.

Reciprocal commensality also goes a long way in explaining the, apparently, erratic behaviour of Peter, Barnabas and the Antiochene Jews. The Jerusalem Conference allowed such practices as reciprocal table fellowship between Jews and Gentiles in the

¹³⁹ Prislin and Christensen, 2005.

cases of those Jews whose identity as Jews was unthreatened by such association with Gentiles, for Gentiles were full members of the early church. Paul, Barnabas and the Antiochene Jewish believers were not contravening the conclusions of the Jerusalem Conference by accepting invitations to dine in the homes of Gentile believers; they were accepting the Gentile believers as full members of the church. Peter, too, was showing his acceptance of the Gentile believers when he ate with them (*Gal.* 2.12). Such acceptance from the designated ‘apostle to the circumcised’ (*Gal.* 2.8) was a major triumph for the Pauline, pro-Gentile faction at Antioch. But the triumph was short-lived. The ‘people from James’ arrived at Antioch and insisted on their rights, under the terms of the Jerusalem Conference, to maintain their Jewish identity by rejecting unacceptable contact with Gentiles even though they were believers. This posed a problem for Peter, Barnabas and the Antiochene Jewish believers for now they were forced to choose between accepting Gentile hospitality and extending Jewish hospitality to the ‘people from James’. The problem for Peter was most acute for these were people from Jerusalem, possibly even co-workers in his mission to the circumcised. Peter migrated to the Jewish camp and other Jews followed him. Peter’s actions are understandable but for Paul they represented a complete denial of his earlier acceptance of the Gentile believers. When the choice had to be made Peter aligned himself with those whose Jewish identity was threatened by exceptional contact with Gentile believers. Peter’s action in withdrawing from reciprocal commensality showed clearly to Paul that Peter did not accept the Gentile believers as equal members of the early church with Jewish believers despite his earlier behaviour. Paul confronted Peter with his objections but the objections were rejected by Peter and apparently by Barnabas and the other Antiochene Jews. In their own understanding, Peter, Barnabas and the other Antiochene Jews were simply abiding by the findings of the Jerusalem Conference in offering hospitality to those Jewish believers who have some conscientious objection to reciprocal table fellowship with Gentile believers. In this context it is important to note that Paul never accuses Peter or the other Antiochene Jewish believers of deviating from the finding of the Jerusalem Conference. His objection is based on what is demanded by the gospel of Christ not on the breaking of agreements.

If Peter and the other Jewish believers were adhering to the Jerusalem agreement then what provoked Paul’s anger to the extent that he confronted Peter and then severed contact with his own community at Antioch? I think several factors contributed to Paul’s anger. Firstly, Paul’s satisfaction at the agreement of the Jerusalem Conference

(Gal. 2.7-10) suggests that he understood the agreement as offering full membership of the early church to the Gentile believers. It is true that the agreement also offered support for those Law-observant Jewish believers who had some conscientious objection to close contact with Gentile believers as threatening their Jewish identity. Although the division of the missions was not geographical, it was probable that such people as these would be found mainly within the land of Israel and that, in the Diaspora where the Gentile believers were more numerous, the Gentile believers would enjoy full membership and equal status with their Jewish brothers. This understanding was amply confirmed by Peter's actions in eating with Gentiles at Antioch. However, the arrival of the 'people from James' reversed this perception; it was obvious that, in the presence of Jewish believers who had some conscientious objection to close contact with Gentile believers as threatening their Jewish identity, the Gentile believers were to be relegated to their previous position of inferior status.¹⁴⁰ After his success at Jerusalem and the approval implied by the actions of Peter, the 'apostle to the circumcised', this change in circumstances must have been a bitter pill for Paul to swallow. Secondly, the agreement of the Jerusalem Conference had elevated Paul's position within the Antiochene church. The Jerusalem agreement meant that Paul's pro-Gentile position became the approved position of the whole church, recognised by the Jerusalem 'pillars' and confirmed by Peter's action at Antioch. From being a leader among the pro-Gentile faction at Antioch, Paul became a leader of the whole church because he represented the prototypical position of the Antiochene church. With the arrival of the 'people from James' the Jewish believers shifted their position and returned to a form of restricted table fellowship. This left Paul as no longer prototypical of the whole Antiochene church and hence he lost some of his credentials as a leader of the whole church. His authority as a leader was undermined.

Perhaps of most importance to Paul was the effect of the return to restricted commensality on the Gentile believers. The rejection of reciprocal hospitality at Antioch had implications for the status of the Gentile believers within the early church. The events of the Jerusalem Conference encouraged the Gentile believers to regard themselves as worthy of equal status and honour with Jewish believers within the community. While restricted commensality was the norm the Gentiles were effectively in a position of

¹⁴⁰ Barclay (1988, p 76) argues that 'the issue involved in the Antioch dispute is the fundamental *equality* of Jew and Gentile.' When the Antiochene Jews withdraw from table fellowship with Gentiles, Paul sees their behaviour as betokening 'a wholly mistaken understanding of the identity of Jewish and Gentile believers' (p 77).

inferiority, dependent on their Jewish brothers for hospitality but unable to return this hospitality. The inability to reciprocate hospitality was likely to be a cause of shame, particularly to the Gentile believers who were of moderate to high social status in the wider community. The Jerusalem agreement allowed Gentile believers a way out of their dishonour by reciprocating hospitality and hence being able to regard themselves and be regarded as equals within the early church community. In inviting Jewish believers to their homes, the Gentiles would be challenging Jewish believers to share their social space with them. Initially this challenge was received positively and the new status of the Gentile believers was acceptable to the community but, with the withdrawal from table fellowship, it was rejected, presumably with loss of face for those Gentile believers whose hospitality was now being rejected. In addition, the ability to offer hospitality to Jewish believers, if that hospitality included the ritual Eucharistic meal, would also bring with it the possibility of presiding over the Eucharistic meal, a position of influence, power and leadership within the church. Thus, I contend, the issue at Antioch was not just whether uncircumcised Gentiles could eat with Jewish believers, but whether uncircumcised Gentiles were equal members of the Antiochene church and, as such, able to participate with the Jewish believers in hosting assemblies of the community and occupying positions of power and leadership within the early church.

Concluding Remarks

7.1 The Conclusions of the Thesis

This thesis deals with the incidents described by Paul in Chapter 2 (1-14) of the *Letter to the Galatians* which occurred at Jerusalem and Antioch. As I noted in the opening Chapter, these incidents have attracted the attention of biblical scholars for many years. The new facet which I hoped to bring to these studies is the use of the insights and models of social psychology. The study of social psychology deals with the behaviour of individuals when they are part of social groups. It researches the processes involved in group formation and the dynamics which occur within and between groups or subgroups as they oppose each other or seek to be more closely assimilated. Social psychologists do not **propose** mechanisms or models to deal with group formation or to facilitate intra-or inter-group relationships; rather they **identify** processes which seem already to exist whenever individuals form themselves into social groups. With this insight into group dynamics, the models of social psychology should provide invaluable resources for analysing the disputes which arose in the early church as it expanded beyond its Jewish origins into the new opportunities offered by the Diaspora of Gentile participation in the Jesus movement. The Jerusalem Conference met to preside over the problem of the Gentile believers in the early church communities. The major groups in dispute were the Antiochene church, which was a mixed church of Jewish and Gentile believers, and those believers who retained an essentially Jewish approach to the early church. The mother church of Jerusalem led by the 'pillars', Peter, James and John, were to arbitrate and ultimately give a verdict on the problem.

In Chapter 2, I identified the specific models and processes which I use in this thesis. These are principally the processes by which an individual enters and proceeds through an existing social group, the procedures involved in the emergence of figures of authority and power, especially leadership, within groups, the processes by which groups in conflict attempt to remain assimilated, and the factors which can lead ultimately to schism within a group. As well as identifying these models I have attempted to give examples of them from the ancient Mediterranean world. As the groups in dispute were

the Jewish and Gentile believers, the data used mainly refers to Jewish and Gentile groups and the interactions between them as well as the attitudes of Gentiles towards Jews and *vice versa*. The specific data for these examples are derived from a variety of sources which include the New Testament, the Hebrew Bible, Second Temple Jewish literature, Jewish writers, especially Josephus, and the writings of Greek and Roman authors of the time. In citing these examples I hope to avoid the criticism that the use of socio-psychological models is anachronistic in biblical research.

Before approaching the issue of the Jerusalem Conference directly, in Chapter 3, I attempted to trace the origins of the Gentile believers at Antioch. Like many scholars I argue that the Gentile believers originated from the ‘sympathizers’ who attached themselves to the Jewish synagogues of the Diaspora. Some of these ‘sympathizers’ acted as patrons and benefactors of the Jews and their synagogue communities. As such they must have been people of, at least, moderate wealth and status in the wider society and could be regarded as status-advantaged. There is little evidence of the status of the Gentiles who joined the church at Antioch but there is no reason to think that they differed substantially from the ‘sympathizers’ from whom they arose. Titus, the only named Gentile believer at Antioch, journeyed around the country as envoy and ambassador for Paul – a position which would seem to require some personal wealth. Paul readily committed the Antiochene Gentile believers to ‘remember the poor’ (*Gal.* 2.10).

The presence of influential ‘sympathizers’ within the synagogues was known within Judaism but there were factors in the early church community which made the situation/status of Gentile believers in the Antiochene church different from that of ‘sympathizers’ within Judaism. If there had been little or no difference between the status of the Gentile believers and the ‘sympathizers’ in Judaism it is difficult to envisage what problem might have precipitated the Jerusalem Conference. The Gentile believers could simply be treated in the same way as the ‘sympathizers’ in Judaism – they could attend meetings, act as benefactors but be unable to exercise authority or power within the communities. In Judaism full membership required complete conversion including, for men, circumcision, but the early church had its own initiation rite of baptism. The Gentile believers at Antioch had undergone an initiation into the church community and so regarded themselves as members of the community in a way that uncircumcised

‘sympathizers’ in Judaism could not. In addition, the Gentiles are represented as entering the Antiochene church in significant numbers (*Acts* 11, 19-26) and thus forming a subgroup within the church, a subgroup not necessarily opposed to the Jewish faction but distinct from it. In any such group some begin to emerge as leaders and these leaders are often those who are viewed by the rest of the group as status-advantaged. It is my contention, in Chapter 4, that Gentile believers began to emerge as leaders of the Gentile subgroup at Antioch, representing their opinions and beliefs to the superordinate group; Titus is such a representative who accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem (*Gal.* 2.1). The exercise of authority through leadership is characteristic of full membership of a group. This status of Gentile believers, demonstrated by the exercise of authority, was contested by some Jewish believers who still required circumcision as the initiation rite into full membership. It was this dispute over the status of Gentile believers in the early church and the appropriateness of their occupying positions of leadership that precipitated the need for the Jerusalem Conference.

At the Conference, the ‘pillars’ were called upon to decide upon the status of the Gentile believers in the early church. Were they full members as a consequence of their baptism with the right to exercise authority and leadership in the community to which full membership entitled them, or was circumcision required for full membership, without which they were limited to an inferior status? The beliefs of both the Pauline faction and the Jewish believers were strongly held; in making their decision the ‘pillars’ risked the possibility of schism. If the ‘pillars’ found totally in favour of the uncircumcised Gentile believers, those Jewish believers, who held on strongly to their Jewish identity through complete Torah observance, were likely to leave the new movement rather than jeopardize their Jewish identity. On the other hand the uncircumcised Gentile believers would lose their status in the new movement and return to an inferior status no better than that of ‘sympathizers’ in Judaism. The Jerusalem Conference appears to have ended amicably and to the satisfaction of all parties; neither Paul nor Luke record any schism following the decision of the ‘pillars’. Inevitably, the decision must have been a compromise of some sort. The most likely compromise was that of dual identity, such that both Jews and Gentiles retained their original identities whilst also being members of the early church. Yet, for the more Law-observant Jewish believers to retain their Jewish identity would involve restricted contact with Gentiles. Therefore, provision needed to be made for these Jewish believers. I suggest that the ‘two

missions' solution allowed Paul and his co-workers to continue their mission to the Gentiles on the basis of full membership of the community for baptised Gentiles. However, there was the concession to the more Law-observant Jewish believers that they need not associate with the Gentile believers in any way which threatened their perception of Jewish identity and that they need not subject themselves to Gentile leadership. In principle this satisfied all parties to the Jerusalem Conference.

At Antioch the Jerusalem Conference solution was put to the test. The Antiochene church welcomed the Gentile believers as full members of the early church communities and accepted their right to positions of authority. But then the 'people from James', who belonged to the more Law-observant faction, arrived at Antioch and the Jewish contingent were forced to choose. They must either continue to associate fully with the Gentile believers and thus reject the visitors from Jerusalem or they must extend Jewish hospitality to the visitors which meant shunning, to some extent, association with their fellow Gentiles. Led by Peter, the Antiochene Jews shunned the Gentile believers, at least for the duration of the visit of the 'people from James'. The whole episode demonstrated forcibly to Paul that the Gentile believers were not being completely accepted, and that whenever the more Law-observant Jewish believers were present the Gentile believers would be relegated to inferior status. He left Antioch.

7.2 Future Prospects for Research

Time and space limit the work which can be performed in the present research project. However, there are a few areas which might merit further investigations. Here I mention just two:

1. In this thesis I examined the dispute at Antioch in the light of the 'two missions' solution described in this thesis. But the solution probably extended beyond Antioch to some of the other disputes which Paul chronicles in later letters. It would be interesting to examine the disputes in Galatia (*Gal.* 5.1-7) and the conflict between the 'weak' and the 'strong' in Rome (*Rom.* 14.1 -15.1) in the light of the 'two missions' solution.
2. I have expressed the opinion, in Chapter 1 (pp 29-30), that the Apostolic Decree did not arise from the Jerusalem Conference but was written subsequently. Again it would be fascinating to analyse the Apostolic Decree in the light of the 'two

missions' solution. Does the Apostolic Decree help to resolve the sort of conflict which occurred at Antioch as a result of the 'two missions' solution?

3. In the next section below I note some similarities between the striving for status of the Gentiles in the early church and the current striving of women for status (and acceptance for leadership) at all levels in today's Christian churches. A thorough analysis of the parallels might provide insights into the how the current difficulties over women in Christian leadership might best proceed.

7.3 The Bias of the Author

In the opening chapter (p 2) I mentioned that the culture and thought of their own period inevitably influences scholars in their studies and interpretation of ancient documents. Undoubtedly this is also true of me. It seems appropriate, therefore, to give some account of my own time and culture.

I have worked for most of my life as a research scientist. As such I am familiar with and have used the laws and rules governing the material world in much of my work. I also judge that there are rules which govern human action, although the complexity of human action makes discerning these rules more difficult than the discerning of the corresponding laws governing the non-living world. I recognise, therefore, that I am more likely to accept that models can be used to predict human behaviour than is someone of a non-scientific background and I am comfortable in using them.

From a religious viewpoint I come from a Roman Catholic background, with the restrictions which this brings on the roles open to women in the church. From a secular viewpoint I have been fortunate to live and work all my adult life in environments in which women were treated with equality. I feel the contrast between my religious and secular existence and, like the Gentile 'sympathizers', experience a certain dissonance at the contrast (see p 122). I see many parallels between the acceptance of Gentile believers into the early church as full members of the community and the present situation of women in the Catholic Church. I often wish that a present day Conference could have the confidence to say 'It seems good to the Holy Spirit and to us' (*Acts 15.28*) with regards to the equality of women.

I have followed with interest the progress made by the Anglican community in its attempts to afford women the same opportunities for leadership already open to men. The solution which is in operation in the Church of England since the ordination of women priests involves what are popularly known as ‘flying bishops’. According to acts of the General Synod, when any parish has a conscientious objection to accepting the ministry of a women priest, that parish can request that no women be so appointed. Further, if their local bishop had officiated in any way at the ordination of a woman to the priesthood, the parish can request that it no longer be under the pastoral care of that bishop but be visited and cared for by a ‘flying bishop’.⁹⁴⁹ Thus schism was avoided by making provision for those members with conscientious objections to women priests. I am aware that this current solution of the Church of England is very similar to the solution I have proposed as comprising the ‘two missions’ verdict of the Jerusalem Conference.

The Church of England is approaching another milestone as the day approaches when it must consider the next step of appointing women bishops. Again the ‘flying bishops’ are to be called upon to care for and minister to those parishes with conscientious objections to women bishops. If the ‘flying bishop’ solution has prevented schism so far, it is unlikely to resolve the problem of women bishops. It is ludicrous to envisage bishops with different areas of authority and with authority which can be rejected by some members at will.

‘[I]f you create yet another stratum of flying bishop acting entirely independently of local women bishops whose authority he rejects, then you have created a separate denomination’.⁹⁵⁰

If the comparison between the status of Gentile believers in the early church and the status of women in some Christian churches today is valid, then lessons can be learnt from history. The setback at Antioch did not deter the Gentile believers; they continued until they were, ultimately, the predominant membership of the church. Women will not be deterred by the current opposition to the endeavours for equal status with men. The future lies with the women as, in the early church, it lay with Gentile believers.

⁹⁴⁹ Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure 1993.

⁹⁵⁰ Damien Thompson, Blogs Editor of the Telegraph Media Group at http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/damianthompson/5369385/This_new_flying_bishop_plan_is_lunacy viewed 20-08-2009.

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